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Lathrop Rockwell Esq, Rhode
Given Hastily by his Friend D.T. Hinsdale
June 20th 1794

THE EXAMINATION OF Mr. EDWARDS, CONTINUED.

THE "EXAMINATION

OF THE LATE

Rev'd President EDWARDS's

Enquiry on Freedom of Will,"

CONTINUED.

SEC. I. On self-determination.
II. On the influence of motives in moral volitions.
III. On necessity.
IV. On the origin of evil.
V. On the connection between the nature and cause of volition.
SEC. VI. Moral evil not best for the world.
VII. On fore-knowledge.
VIII. On texts of scripture misconstrued.
IX. Objections considered.
X. On metaphysical reasoning.
XI. Recapitulation.

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED,

STRICTURES on the Rev'd Mr. WEST'S "essay on moral agency," &c.

By JAMES DANA, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN WALLINGFORD.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

NEW-HAVEN:

Printed by THOMAS and SAMUEL GREEN. 1773.

INTRODUCTION.

SOME things which were but juſt touched, or conſidered only in a general way, in the examination of Mr. Edwards, require a further and particular examination: And other things need a more diſtinct explanation: His denial of moral, rational liberty; his diſtinction of natural and moral neceſſity; attributing the origin of evil to the want or withdraw of divine aſſiſtance; ſeperating the obliquity of ſin from its cauſe; are ſome of the points that require a further *examination.* And thoſe that need a more diſtinct *explanation* are the doctrine of human liberty as maintained by the examiner, and the conſiſtency thereof with admitting the operation of motives in the choice and determinations of moral agents.

The examiner hath the ſame opinion ſtill of the intricacy of the ſubject as was expreſſed in his former publication, and means to proceed in it with caution and diffidence. If he may be ſo happy as to caſt any light on the abſtruſe ſubject of liberty and neceſſity, or reſcue it in any important reſpect from its obſcurity, his time will not be ill-employed. But the main thing in view all along has been to vindicate the moral character of the Deity from the injurious repreſentations, either of deſigning, or well-meaning but miſtaken men.

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The ſcheme of neceſſity, in oppoſition to ſelf-determination, cannot, he thinks, be defended on the principles of revelation or theiſm, if this one thing be admitted, that God is not the cauſe of moral evil. If it be affirmed, that he is the efficient cauſe of it, his moral perfections are denied. If moral agents themſelves are the efficient cauſe, this is to admit ſelf-determination.

Some maintain only an hypothetic liberty. On their principles neceſſity may be tenable---*provided* there is neither holineſs nor ſin in the creation of God--no being worthy of moral complacence or diſplicence, praiſe or blame.

The examiner begs the reader to keep in mind this ſingle queſtion, *Whether Mr. Edwards's doctrine makes God the efficient cauſe of all moral wickedneſs?* He is himſelf clear in the affirmative of the queſtion, or would not have undertaken to examine Mr. Edwards's book. If this ſhould alſo be the reader's opinion, it is preſum'd the ſcheme which contains or concludes in this will be rejected. To reduce a *Chriſtian* writer to this is ſufficient, without going any further. Nor will there be occaſion to ſhew how different ſuch a ſcheme is from the ſentiments of thoſe who have been eſteemed orthodox in the pureſt times of the church: It is with no great propriety, that Mr. Edwards makes it the caption of almoſt every ſection, that his foundation principles are the doctrines of *Calviniſm*; and the oppoſite *Arminianiſm*, *Pelagianiſm*, &c. Were it indeed ſo, what other purpoſe can this ſerve than to caſt an odium, and fix a perſonal *ſtigma?* But in truth, when have Calviniſts maintain'd, that the vicious wills of moral agents are derived from God, and unalterably fixed by his efficiency? that the firſt exiſtence of ſin aroſe from the withholding his influence and aſſiſtance? Should it alſo appear that Mr. Edwards's doctrine leaves no room for a diſtinction between rational and animal creatures in reſpect of liberty and agency--that it concludes in favour of the mechaniſm of the human mind, this is a baſis on which Calviniſts have not built their ſcheme of doctrine.

In ſome parts of the enſuing performance, the examiner hath been obliged to be more abſtruſe than was his own choice; ſome readers might otherwiſe have thought him wanting

wanting in reſpect to Mr. Edwards, whoſe book is repleat with ſuch reaſoning; abundant pains being taken this way to deduce his adverſaries to abſurdity. But whatever propriety there may be in oppoſing metaphyſics to metaphyſics, yet the examiner would aſſure the reader, he hath taken care not to ſubſtitute any metaphyſics of his own for truth; but hath endeavoured to ſuggeſt ſome *plain* things on what he takes to be the real truth in the preſent debate. He deſires the reader would excuſe a few things that may appear abſtruſe, and hopes the greater part of what he hath written will be thought ſufficiently clear, and adapted to do ſome good. The whole calls for the public candor, which he would not forfeit by writing with a ſour temper.

He hath not been at all intimidated by the opinion or arguments of his remarker, who thinks "the grand pillars "of Mr. Edwards's doctrine ſtand firm and unſhaken." Nor hath he any apology to make for undertaking to examine Mr. Edwards's book. Tis enough, that the examiner treated "this great man" with no diſrepect in his firſt publication, and determines not to in the preſent.

March 29, 1773.

SECTION

SECTION I.

On Self-determination.

WE ſhall firſt explain the doctrine of human liberty in the ſenſe in which we maintain it. Secondly, Make a few curſory obſervations on Mr. Edwards's ſcheme of liberty.

Power, motion and agency are terms of various ſignification. The two firſt are frequently uſed in mechanics, and all of them may be applied to animal creatures. "Power may reſide in a ſubject that is no agent; as in the caſe of phyſical or natural powers."

When we ſpeak of the motions and revolutions of inanimate bodies, it may amount to the ſame thing at laſt, whether we attribute theſe to an eſtabliſhed original law of nature, or to the conſtant agency of the Deity upon matter. The courſe of nature is the conſtitution of the author of nature. It is demonſtrably not ſo fixed as to preclude ſpecial divine interpoſition, whereby the operation of ſecond cauſes is ſuſpended or counteracted. We cannot, indeed, determine how far this is the caſe. Many events may be brought about (at leaſt in part) by ſecond cauſes, which we may imagine belong to the head of ſpecial interpoſitions, over-ruling thoſe cauſes. 'Tis difficult to aſcertain the powers of nature, as well as thoſe of moral agents.

There is a ſenſe in which *there is no power but of God.* And if any chuſe to ſay, that natural cauſes (ſo called) are really no cauſe at all; that God actuates all the powers of nature, and that from his energy every effect in the natural world proceeds, we have no objection to make. We only deſire it may be remembered, that mechanic powers, the motions of inanimate bodies, bear no reſemblance to, and give us no idea of, the powers of moral and accountable

creatures. Shou'd one undertake to illuſtrate conſciouſneſs by the vibrations of a pendulum, it would not be more ridiculous than a pretence to explain the powers of human nature by the motions of the planets, the growth of vegetables, &c. Theſe are ſo far from being any exemplification of *moral* agency, that they bear no likeneſs even to *animal* motion. For this is *voluntary*. And we preſume it will not be ſaid that voluntary motion is predicable of inanimate things---not even by thoſe *philoſophers* who have reſembled the powers of moral nature to thoſe of material bodies.

Nor will the conſideration of *animal* motion and agency, any more than the motions of inanimate bodies, afford us any proper illuſtration of moral agency. Voluntary motion and exertion is indeed common to moral agents and the lower animals. Theſe have natural power, forecaſte, memory, can move this way or that as *they pleaſe*, or *according to the determination of their will.* They are agents--voluntary agents---'Tis apparent they "act electively"---from deſign--to certain ends. They are capable of being taught many things. From the ſagacity ſome of them diſcover, many have conjectur'd that they have an immortal ſpirit, and are accountable. This, we apprehend, is going too far, and find Mr. Edwards concurs with us.* Whatever gradations there are in the creation, mankind appear to be the loweſt order of *intelligent moral* agents. The appearances of reaſon in many of the brute creatures are eaſily accounted for without ſuppoſing them poſſeſs'd of a moral faculty---in much the ſame manner as we account for many inſtances of the conduct of ideots, who never had the exerciſe of this faculty; of madmen, who have loſt it; and of children before they arrive to the exerciſe of it. What they ſee and experience from day to day affords them inſtruction, and influenceth their conduct, without their having any perception of good and evil in a *moral* view. The ſame holds, in a degree, in the inferior creatures. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib.* And thoſe animals, who *have no guide, overſeer or ruler*, give proofs of ſagacity and forecaſte, the conſideration of which wou'd be of uſe

* P. 41.

uſe to many who have reaſon for their guide. The animal creatures are alſo the ſubjects of certain internal diſpoſitions and affections. They have a common care and tenderneſs for their young. Some of the feebler ſort aſſociate for the double purpoſe of protection and common uſefulneſs. Some kinds of them are of a fierce, venomous, or ravenous diſpoſition; others are mild, gentle and harmleſs. "Spontaneous voluntary exertion" belongs to every ſpecies of them. But though ſpontaneous animal motion may approach the neareſt to moral agency, of any thing in viſible nature; yet it is eſſentially different thereform, nor doth it give us any proper idea thereof. A juſt notion of moral agency we can derive only from attending to the nature and operations of the human mind---not from a contemplation of inanimate or animate nature. *The inſpiration of the Almighty hath given us underſtanding. I will praiſe thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well. God created man in his own image.*

It ſeems, notwithſtanding, that ſome gentlemen need to be inform'd, that man hath a diſtinctive power from animals. We ſcruple not to riſque the whole controverſy on their being able to point out a difference, ſtill retaining their own principles.

Hard is our taſk to be obliged to explain the difference between a man and a brute in regard of liberty and ſelf-determination. Such minds as acknowledge no difference, we fear cannot be convinc'd. In regard to truths we are immediately conſcious of, every medium of proof, all reaſoning, not only ſeems needleſs, but rather ſerves to obſcure than elucidate what is propoſed to be proved. As tho' by removing the object to a greater diſtance, we wou'd obtain a more diſtinct and full view of it.

The diſtinctive faculty of moral agents we before endeavoured to ſtate and explain--and we think it was ſhewn, that moral liberty really differs from animal, and that, "in finite beings placed upon trial, it implies an opportunity and capacity of chuſing and acting otherwiſe than they in fact do."* Further to illuſtrate and confirm the ſame

* Examination of Edwards, Part III. Sect. I.

ſame thing, we deſire the capacity moral agents have of *examining* and *conſidering* before they make their choice, or proceed to act, in any given caſe, may be well attended to. They can determine to conſider the reaſonableneſs or unreaſonableneſs of any propoſed object of choice--whether it be conſiſtent with, or contrary to, their duty--whether it be for their intereſt upon the whole--and conſequently, whether it is the part of wiſdom to chuſe or refuſe it. They have this power in regard to *ſpeculative* principles, as well as with reſpect to life and conduct. They can examine the nature and evidence of what is propoſed to 'm for truth, and embrace or reject it as it ſhall appear to be true or falſe upon diligent and impartial enquiry; or give it that weight which its greater or leſs importance ſhall demand. Error in principle is one great ſource of men's practical deviations from the paths of righteouſneſs. Hence it is, not infrequently, that they juſtify and boaſt themſelves in a way that is not good, imagining they are doing God ſervice, when in reality they are fighting againſt him. Now ſo far as men judge wrong, and in conſequence thereof act wrong, thro' their own careleſſneſs, or neglect, or through partiality in their enquiries after truth; ſo far they are criminal, and chargeable with all the practical conſequences of their wrong judgment. If the miſtakes of mankind on *practical* ſubjects are ſearched to the bottom, the probability is, that the greater part of ſuch miſtakes will be found to proceed from that cauſe our Lord mentions, *Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhou'd be reproved.* And this is their condemnation. For what hath that man to plead, who receives not the love of the truth, *becauſe he hath pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs?* From whatever cauſe men refuſe to examine the foundation and reaſonableneſs of thoſe religious principles they profeſs to maintain, or reject; whether it be from education, intereſt, or partial affection; they are criminal, and muſt anſwer it to him who has given them a capacity to diſcern the difference between right and wrong, good and evil---who has granted them the neceſſary means of knowledge, and requires that they *prove all things*; *and hold faſt that which*

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is good--that they *judge even of themſelves what is right.* Had that rule, which ſome have laid down to themſelves and others, "firſt *determine* and then *examine*," been univerſally adopted, knowledge cou'd never have increaſed---ignorance, ſuperſtition and barbariſm muſt have overſpread the earth.

Then in matters which more immediately reſpect the *heart and life*, moral agents have the ſame power of examining and attending to what is laid before them. Moſt of their vicious elections and purſuits probably proceed from want of attention and conſideration. They have a power of reflecting---of acquainting themſelves which is the wiſe choice and courſe. But they do not ſtop and conſider what is before them---what choice they are about to make---what will be the conſequence in this world or another. Their concluſions are precipitate, and they proceed to action as the horſe ruſheth into the battle. What ſtrikes their external ſenſes, and promiſes a preſent gratification to their particular affections, luſts or paſſions, is wont to be greedily embrac'd and purſued---what requires ſome ſelf-denial and mortification of theſe is quickly rejected, before that faculty, which is naturally ſupream, and was given to direct and controul the bodily appetites, inſtincts and paſſions, can paſs judgment in the caſe. Wrong apprehenſions, wrong affections and conduct, proceeding in ſo many inſtances as they manifeſtly do from the neglect of reaſon and reflection, ſhew of what vaſt importance it is that moral agents ſet down and conſider before they paſs judgment, or make their election, and determine what courſe to take, in things that concern them. Experience concurs with the ſacred oracles in atteſting, that the want of attention and examination is a principal ſource of the fatal miſtakes and miſcarriages of mankind: And how cou'd it be expected it ſhou'd be otherwiſe, when the regulating faculty of our nature, inſtead of being improv'd in the ſearch of truth and duty, is uſed, if at all, as a ſervant to the ſenſitive appetites? This is a like contradiction in morals as it is in civil life to ſee ſervants on horſes, and princes walking like ſervants on the earth---or as if the feet ſhould uſurp the place of the head in the natural body.

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When in any given caſe it is dubious what courſe is our duty to take, or wou'd be moſt prudent all things conſidered, by deliberating on the matter we may come to be clearly ſatisfied ; whereas if we proceed immediately to action, we are liable to err fatally---and ſhou'd it be otherwiſe, we can't have the pleaſure of knowing that we are right---'tis accidental that we are ſo---we merit no commendation, but rather deſerve blame for runing the hazard of being in the wrong, when we might have obtained full conviction had we been at the pains, and given ourſelves time, to reflect a few moments.

Or ſuppoſe the ſenſe of duty is ſufficiently clear, but we are beſet by numerous and powerful temptations, have we not power to make a pauſe ? By this means, we may obtain ſuch a view of the particular evil to which we are enticed, ſuch conſiderations may be ſuggeſted to our minds, as that a preſent temptation, however ſtrong, ſhall not prevail, but gradually looſe ſtrength and be overcome. Will you ſay that men in this caſe have not power to forbear immediate action ? to reflect a moment ? Doubtleſs they have power to determine immediately with themſelves to conſider the matter. Eſpecially muſt they be admitted to have this power, if we take into the account the operations of divine grace on their hearts. In this way many good tho'ts are often injected in the moment of danger. May they not be cheriſh'd, and made our own ? By reflections on the nature of virtue and vice ; their rewards and puniſhments preſent and future ; the paſt peaceable and happy fruits of the one ; and contrary effects of the other, in our own experience, or obſervation of others ; by reflections on the moral perfections and government of God ; the perſon and offices of Jeſus Chriſt, and calling to mind other conſiderations ſuggeſted by the oracles of truth, the force of a preſent temptation may be ſpeedily weakned thro' the influences of grace ſuggeſting and concuring with ſuch moral conſiderations. While the force of conſcience is abated by ſtifling it's remonſtrances, and hearkning to the ſollicitations of luſt and appetite in oppoſition thereto ; it's ſenſibility is, on the contrary, proportionably increaſed by reflection and attention. Now to ſay that thoſe who

who live very much without moral reflection and attention; therefore cannot determine otherwise with themselves, is implicitly to deny that they have the faculty of reason. They can deliberate on the means and opportunities of gratifying their lusts. What good reason can be offer'd to shew they have not power to turn their meditations into another channel?

But as it is an important duty of moral agents to accustom themselves to diligent enquiry and mature consideration, that they may know what they ought to chuse and pursue, and what to refuse and avoid, and not act as the horse and mule who have no understanding---so it shou'd not be forgotten, that they sometimes deliberate with a very different and opposite view---not to discover their duty where it is doubtful, but to explain it away where it is plain. In cases where an upright mind can be at no loss, but makes immediate choice, a dishonest heart will hesitate, and, under a notion of deliberating in order to discover what may or ought to be done, contriveth excuses for the violation of a clear command. Sometimes great and scandalous vices are refined upon till they are tho't to be no vices; perhaps are transformed into virtues. Well were it if some men were as dexterous and ingenious, in calling to mind arguments to their duty as they are in finding out reasons against it, and means of darkning and perplexing the sense of it---as they are in the palliations and excuses they contrive for their sins, and in what they offer in justification of themselves. They had rather sin with their eyes shut than with them open. Hence they take abundant pains to obscure the sense and meaning of the plainest commands, that they may possess the hope of religion, while they walk according to the course of this world. A single example will set this matter in a strong light. Balaam, we read, loved the wages of unrighteousness, while he hoped to die the death of the righteous. Hence he wou'd not go in *direct* contradiction to his duty in order to obtain Balak's reward, but set himself to reconcile his duty with his views of worldly gain and preferment. After God had plainly told him once, that he should not curse Israel, it was enough---he shou'd have enquired no further. Yet after this he held

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one conſultation and another with Balak's meſſengers, and enquires of God again and again concerning the matter whereof he had already been fully certified. Not ſucceeding according to his mind, though he perſiſted in his reſolution not to curſe Iſrael without an explicit divine permiſſion, yet he proceeded to *counſel Balak to lay a ſtumbling block before* them, which prov'd their deſtruction. In this way he pacified his conſcience, while he as effectually broke over the divine inſtructions as if he had curſed Iſrael in the name of God. In many (perhaps moſt) caſes men's duty is plain at the firſt propoſal. It is difficult to miſtake it. In ſuch caſes, deliberation is but a ſubterfuge to break over the obligation of it. Hence it is that men affect to doubt in the plaineſt matters, i. e. the moſt important. By indirect means, they evade the ſenſe of moral and religious obligation, and keep all quiet within, while they do thoſe things in *effect*, which they wou'd ſtart back at the thought of doing in a *direct* manner. Had they made their choice and acted according to the firſt appearance of things, they wou'd have choſen the good and right way: But ſome favourite hypotheſis muſt be maintain'd, ſome luſt or paſſion gratified, at all events; and hence it is that they labour to reconcile things contrary, as light and darkneſs, righteouſneſs and unrighteouſneſs. 'Tis hard to give up the hopes of religion, but harder to ſacrifice their worldly views.

Some (and theſe men of fine parts) have gone further, and proſtituted their ſuperior talents in embelliſhing vice, and attempting to take off from it it's juſt odium; employing their powers in the cauſe of infidelity, ſaping the foundation of every religious principle, and conſequently of all virtue. As though the gift of reaſon were beſtowed on us to ſubſerve the gratification of the appetites and paſſions---that we might make ourſelves more vile than the beaſts that periſh---might ſin with more *delicacy* and *malignity* indeed, but with no remorſe. We cou'd wiſh there were not ſo great a ſimilarity between the writings of ſome authors of this ſtamp, and Mr. Edwards's book on the will.

That attention and examination, which, as moral agents, we

we are capable of, and is our bounden duty, is of such evident importance that to the neglect of it are attributed in scripture most of the sins and miseries of men. *My people will not consider. O that they were wise, that they ---would consider!* Consideration is represented as necessary to, and a likely means of, the reformation of sinners. And the exhortation to *consider our ways* is in effect the same as that, *amend your ways*. This capacity of considering and judging, of distinguishing virtue and vice, "and their fruits in the present life, which are the proper samples of" their consequences in another, is an important distinction of mankind from the animal creatures, and shews that the former determine themselves in a sense which the latter do not. Especially when we further consider, that "shou'd reason neglect it's post, conscience is appointed as an instinctive kind of monitor, perpetually to remind us both of our interest and our duty." The animal creatures act as impelled by instinct and appetite. They have not a power of deliberating, reasoning, reflecting---they wait only for an opportunity of action, without being able to consider the consequences. And when moral agents act without consideration, they forget the distinction put on their nature, and *haste as a bird to the snare, not knowing it is for their life.*

By suspending judgment, election and action, new reasons often arise to the mind--many times diverse from, and opposite to, those first extant in it, and an overmatch for them. This observation may be applied to matters of speculation and practice, * and to that two-fold design moral agents have in deliberating and suspending, of which we have been speaking, viz. either to discover the truth and their moral obligations, that they may the better fulfil their duty--or to get confirmed in error, to darken the sense of moral right, and find means to justify or excuse themselves in their various vicious pursuits. By suspend-

* There is, indeed, no speculative truth of importance but what relates to practice, in an higher or lower degree, immediately or more remotely. Speculative error is wont to beget vicious affections, and vicious affections speculative error. Infidelity and dissolute manners are mutually the parents and the offspring of each other. That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good.

ing and reflecting with the former view, a full perſuaſion may be begotten in the mind that *that* is truth, which before was ſuppoſed to be falſhood or error---that which was doubtful may be clear'd up--the path of duty may become plain--new arguments in ſupport of truths before received may be ſuggeſted--new inducements to profeſs and live according to them. To which may be added, that the ſpirit of truth and holineſs is ever ready to direct and ſucceed the enquiries of thoſe who have probity of mind; to ſuggeſt to them the moſt convincing reaſons for the truth, the moſt powerful motives to duty, and to operate therewith. None of the wicked ſhall underſtand, but the wiſe ſhall underſtand.

On the contrary, thoſe who ſuſpend and deliberate from the latter view mentioned above, juſtly expoſe themſelves to be given over to ſtrong deluſions; their fooliſh heart becomes darkned, and hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin. They become an eaſy prey to the god of this world, who is permitted to blind their eyes, ſo that the arguments and motives of reaſon and religion have little or no weight with them.

Much the ſame may be ſaid of thoſe, whoſe luſts and paſſions *precipitate* their moral judgment, as of the more deliberate workers of wickedneſs who take much pains to darken and bribe it. They alike expoſe themſelves to be delivered over to the will and power of the deceiver of the nations, the enemy of all righteouſneſs.

But it is objected, that ſuſpending implies, the mind hath already made its choice; that is, it hath choſen to deliberate and examine--that the difficulty, therefore, ſtill returns, and the cauſe of this determination to ſuſpend remains to be pointed out.

To this we anſwer, that a moral agent either hath power to *originate* an act of ſuſpenſion, and ſo bring himſelf into the view of new motives; or the ſuſpending act proceeds from a motive extant in his mind at the ſame inſtant with ſome motive to immediate election or action. The former will not be allowed, as it would be at once to admit ſelf-determination. And on the latter ſuppoſition, the motive to ſuſpend, muſt be *previous* to the act of ſuſpenſion,

ſuſpenſion, elſe it cannot be the cauſe of that act--cannot move or excite to it. There muſt be the exertion of the cauſe before the effect can take place. But if the motive to ſuſpend be previous to the act of ſupenſion, then the other motive to immediate election and action muſt determine the will *till* the motive to ſuſpend has produced its effect: That is, the agent is determined, his choice is made, before he determines to ſuſpend; the act of ſuſpenſion is an after act. In other words, there is, properly ſpeaking, no ſuſpenſion at all. Or viewing the matter in the moſt favourable light, it will ſtand thus: A moral agent cannot be the ſource of ſuſpenſion in himſelf. No motive *ab extra* to ſuſpend being extant in his mind, he muſt immediately make his choice. To ſay he had a power of awakening in himſelf a motive to ſuſpend, or of negativing a preſent motive to action, would be to aſſert ſelf-determination; or to ſay, that the act of ſuſpenſion had already taken place, which, by ſuppoſition, can be only in conſequence of ſome previous motive. There was, then, a temptation exhibited to the mind of Lucifer, while a ſon of the morning, to riſe up in rebellion againſt the Moſt High. It had poſitive influence to excite and move him to this thing. He had no intrinſic power to negative it, or to ſuſpend election, or view the temptation in any other light than he in fact did. It neceſſarily determined him. Upon his revolt, he was an inſtrument in ſuggeſting a ſimilar temptation to our progenitors in paradiſe--which they could view no otherwiſe than they did--their choice was determined in the ſame way. Thus ſin and miſery came into the world. Here is the true ſource of all the wickedneſs of men and devils. Can it be defended on the maxims of reaſon, experience or religion? Is it not wholly forgotten, that moral agents have the faculty of *reaſon*, the power of *reflection?* Let this ſingle queſtion be decided, Whether vicious beings derive *the ſtate of their wills* from the author of their frame? and the whole diſpute will be determined accordingly. The affirmative makes God the cauſe and fountain of wickedneſs; the negative makes moral agents themſelves the cauſe.

cauſe. Let reaſon and religion ſay, which opinion is to be prefered.

There can, ſtrictly ſpeaking, be no motive to the choice and determination of a *rational* creature, but ſuch as comports with the dignity of his nature, conſcience being always conſidered as ſupreme. Hence motives of intereſt, honor, pleaſure, are motives to purſue what is, *upon the whole*, beneficial, honorable, pleaſurable---not what may *caſually* gratify the lower affections and appetites, in oppoſition to reaſon, to the true intereſt, dignity and enjoyment of a moral and accountable creature. To ſay, that ſuch a creature, in caſe of a competition of objects, cannot ſtop and conſider *which* reaſon directs to, and govern himſelf accordingly, is either to deny him the power of reflection, or to ſuppoſe him given over to a reprobate mind. When the animal propenſities and the dictates of reaſon are at variance, (as they often are) may not the former be negatived? And is it not ſomewhat of a ſoleciſm to ſay, a rational creature can have a motive to act unreaſonably? In a looſe way of ſpeaking, we are indeed wont to ſay, that the covetous, ambitious and voluptuous have motives to the purſuit of unjuſt gain, unlawful pleaſure, and to make their way to preferment by diſhonorable means. But it may be worthy of conſideration, whether, in ſtrict propriety, a motive to ſuch a choice and purſuit, as contradicts the leading and diſtinguiſhing principle of our nature, really deſerves to be called a motive to ſuch a being as man? Be this as it will, we evidently have a power of deliberating, reflecting, or ſuſpending---of conſidering what is before us---Moral agents "have a capacity of being in-
"fluenced in their actions by moral inducements and mo-
"tives, exhibited to the view of *underſtanding and reaſon*,
"*to engage to a conduct agreable to the moral faculty.*" This capacity in moral agents, admitted and maintain'd by Mr. Edwards, is a demonſtrable proof of ſelf-determination, as it implies the power of ſuſpending, which we have been arguing for. A power of ſuſpending election and action is plainly a power of determining whether we will be governed by reaſon and the principles of religion, or not.

And

And can this power be allowed to moral agents conſiſtently with the denial of ſelf-determination ? *

While the agency of the animal creatures is as neceſſary as the rotation of the earth and revolutions of the planets, the cauſe of *moral* volitions is in the mind itſelf which is the ſubject of them, as will appear, we apprehend, from a little attention to the moral faculty of underſtanding. This regulating power of moral agents ideots and madmen have not, and therefore are not moral agents any more than brutes. And though, as was ſaid before, the motions of inanimate bodies or of animals are not ſimilar to moral agency ; yet were the dictate of the moral faculty followed without deviation, mankind would as regularly fill up their place in the creation, as the lower animals do theirs ---as regularly as the ſeaſons revolve, or the heavenly bodies move. There would be as great harmony in moral nature as appears in the other works of God.

Superior intelligences, in other worlds, we may ſuppoſe, are as regular to the duties of their ſtation, and fulfil the pleaſure of the Creator with a like punctuality and conſtancy, as the luminaries of heaven ſhine. That men on earth do not, in their meaſure, fulfil his will as it is done by higher orders of beings in heaven, is their ſin ; as they have the ſame general faculty to direct and govern 'em, how much ſoever the inhabitants of the world above may *excel in* intellectual *ſtrength*. Were there not a proper cauſe in the mind, the exerciſes and actions of mankind wou'd uniformly be ſuch as the order of our nature points out. And the ſuppoſition of the *fall* of angels or men wou'd be as wild, as the ſuppoſition of the everlaſting mountains moving out of their place, or the interruption of the harmony of the ſpheres. At leaſt it wou'd be viewed

* A learned and very worthy friend, on peruſing what we had wrote on the article of ſuſpending preſent volition, deliberating, &c. was pleaſed to ſuggeſt, that "as it muſt depend on the moral agent *himſelf*, whether he will ſuſpend, conſider, &c. and conſequently is a "full proof, or rather the actual exerciſe, of ſelf-determination ; ſo "*this may be the foundation of an entire difference between God and the "creature*. There is no room for conſideration, or any act or exerciſe ſimilar to it in God, becauſe of his omniſcience. But the "vertue of an intelligent creature depends much, very much, not to "ſay wholly, upon it."

ed in no other light than any alteration in the material world, or ſuſpenſion of the laws of nature. The latter might as well be judged criminal and morally evil as the former. If the cauſe of the exerciſes and actions of moral agents be not in themſelves, then the Deity is the proper efficient cauſe of them. Now we ſee that all his operations, all the effects of his agency in the material world and animal nature, are uniform and harmonious---the ſame from age to age. If the moral exerciſes and conduct of rational accountable beings proceed from the efficiency of the ſame cauſe, from the ſame lover of order and harmony, why then are they ſo irregular and out of courſe? This ſingle conſideration is enough to ſatisfy us, that the mind of a moral agent is the true cauſe of his own election, and actions. *

The author of our beings is the proper cauſe of our moral capacity---the father of our ſpirits. This capacity the effect of his inſpiration, is the proper cauſe of volition. It may be well improved, or neglected and perverted. There are created beings who have improved it well, as there are who have perverted it. The latter might have made the ſame uſe of it as the former, and herein wou'd have fallen in with the deſign of the creator, and been workers together with God for his glory and their own felicity and honour. Therefore the perverſion of this capacity is not to be attributed to God as the cauſe: *For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.* In their innocent ſtate, men and angels were capable of attending to the calm dictates of reaſon--of perceiving clearly the ſuperiority

* The effects of divine agency in the natural world being uniform, while moral volitions and actions are not ſo, is a clear proof that the latter are not, in like manner, the product of divine operation. For as Mr. Edwards maintains, that the moral world is the end of the natural, can it be that the God of order acts out of courſe in events of a *moral* nature, which are of by far the greateſt moment, while in *natural* events he obſerves a ſtated method of operation? The ſuppoſition of the divine agency in ſin, moreover, confounds the diſtinction between the agency or influence of God, and that of the devil. And further, how can that influence, which holy beings are under, be holy in reference to its cauſe, unleſs that which vicious beings are under is allowed to be wicked in reference to it's cauſe. However, the devil is not the *cauſe* of men's ſins, though it is through his inſtigation that they fall into ſin.

ſuperiority of this principle to the inſtincts and appetites of animal nature. There was nothing "in their wills" that cou'd indiſpoſe them to attend to the voice of reaſon. God made them upright--deſigned they ſhou'd continue ſo, and gave them power to abide in their firſt ſtate--in the knowledge, love and enjoyment of himſelf. And however this depended on continu'd divine communications, theſe wou'd not have been withdrawn till the creature had firſt abuſed and forfeited them--as is propoſed to be ſhewn in the ſequel. The ableſt philoſophers and divines have maintain'd, that God originally endow'd mankind with freedom of will--that from the abuſe of this "freedom all miſery and ſin, all natural and moral evils, derive their exiſtence--it being more eligible that" man "ſhou'd be" created "a free agent, than a mere machine."*

It may be difficult exactly to determine what the powers of human nature now are, or what they were in Adam in his innocent ſtate. We may yet ſafely aſſert, that his duty did not exceed his abilities as he came out of the forming hands of God. To ſay it did, wou'd be impeaching the maker and governor of the world with the injuſtice which the ſervant in the parable complain'd of, *Thou art an hard maſter, reaping where thou haſt not ſown.* And ſhall we preſume to ſay of him who is righteous altogether, that he demanded

* "There is a *gradation* or ſcale of aſcent of the principle of action among creatures, in proportion to their perfection—The firſt being is the ſole principle of action in all *inanimate matter*. In *animal motion*, the animals themſelves are admitted into a ſmall participation of the production of the effect, as they have the direction of ſome motions, or the power of beginning them. *Brutes* and *men* are thus far ſpontaneous with regard to the motions of their bodies. But men have further a power of directing arbitrarily their perceptive capacity to and throughout their paſt perceptions, which brutes have not—and which therefore is the *ſpecific difference* betwixt rational and irrational beings. —What is it to *will?* Is it not to *act?* If it be to act, it is to have *the internal principle* of action——This I take to be the uſe of the beauty of nature, and that conſtancy, thoſe certain ſtated laws by which the motions and changes in the world are governed, *that free agents could have no fore-ſight or judgment without this conſtancy. There would be without this no choice or judgment, becauſe there would be no courſe of things.* If we ſhould ſuppoſe a contrary method to obtain,—what fear and irreſolution, what diſappointment, confuſion and final diſorder might we not apprehend in all human affairs!"

Baxter on the ſoul, vol. I. p. 177, 178; 203; 208.

demanded improvement beyond the number of talents given? If not, then the fall of man was not owing to any want of power to continue upright, but to his abuſe of original ability. His dependance on divine influence for the preſervation of his moral rectitude, as well as of his exiſtence, proveth nothing to the contrary, if it be true, that *that* influence wou'd not have been withheld, had not man, by ſome act of rebellion, incur'd the forfeiture of it. For we pretend not that any creature ever had an independent power, either for the purpoſes of life or godlineſs. But the creature may neglect or abuſe what he hath received; and in conſequence of that, what he hath may be taken away. Man, therefore, had at firſt ſuch powers and communications from God as were ſufficient to his continuing and improving in the knowledge, in the moral reſemblance and enjoyment of his maker. His original ſin appears to have been a neglect of reaſon and haſty liſtning to the ſollicitations of appetite. In all probability it was a very ſudden act. By this he forfeited the preſence and grace of God; whereof he was immediately convinc'd, and fear'd to appear before that glorious being whoſe diſpleaſure he had incurred, and with whom his correſpondence before was moſt intimate. But upon the exhibition of a ſavior to him, under the character *of the ſeed of the woman*, his hopes revived. With the delivery of this original promiſe to him, he was put under a capacity of recovering by repentance and faith in the ſeed promiſed what he had loſt by hearkning to the tempter. In this promiſe *life and bleſſing* were again ſet before him, and his offended creator ſaid to him, *Chuſe life*. Whatever power was loſt, whatever inability incur'd, by the firſt apoſtacy, in *regeneration*, a ſimilar power is reſtor'd as man in innocency had--not indeed a power of living wholly without ſin; but a general habit of holineſs; ſuch exerciſes and diſpoſitions of heart as conform the creature to the creator, and which in ſcripture are ſignified by being *renewed after the image of God---renewed in the ſpirit of our minds--ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus*--being *new creatures*, &c. Out of a regard to the mediator, great and precious promiſes are made to the apoſtate ſons of men--particularly the promiſe of the aids of the

ſpirit

ſpirit, through which alone any are renewed in knowledge, and become partakers of God's holineſs. Repentance and faith in Chriſt hold the ſame place in the religion of a fallen creature, as unfining obedience did in that of our progenitors while they remained upright. By the goſpel God calleth upon all men every where to repent, and believe in his ſon for reconciliation and ſalvation. He alſo gives his ſpirit with his goſpel, of which unregenerate men receive a meaſure. And to him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance. We do not aſcribe any ſelf-derived, independent power, either to unregenerate or regenerate men; but ſuch only as they have received from God, of which they are not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the proprietors, but ſtewards. The latter are faithful ſtewards of the gifts and grace of God; the former are unfaithful, and waſte his goods. And whatever impotency is derived to us from the human apoſtacy, 'tis ſufficient that in regeneration ſuch power is reſtor'd as is equal to the purpoſes of ſalvation---that as men have received grace, ſo God is ever ready to ſupport them in duty, while they acknowledge their dependance, and draw nigh to him. *For every one that aſketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth.*

The things that have been offered are ſufficient to prove, that moral volitions proceed from a cauſe in moral agents themſelves, and to explain in what ſenſe we maintain this. They ſerve further to illuſtrate and eſtabliſh our doctrine of human liberty. * The remaining part of

 this

* Further to illuſtrate and confirm the ſubject of our preſent enquiry, we beg leave to make ſome quotations from a writer of great merit.

" The true reaſon why a perſon cannot complain of being made anſwerable for an action, is, that he has *produced* it himſelf knowingly and willingly—is the real *author*, the *productive cauſe*, of his actions—the good or bad effects from thence ariſing may be juſtly attributed and referred to him, as to the *efficient cauſe*—the *author or moral cauſe*. Every thing almoſt that is ſaid and done in human ſociety ſuppoſes this principle generally received, and every body acquieſceth in it from an inward conviction—Every action or omiſſion ſubject to the direction of man, can be charged to the account of the perſon in whoſe power it was to do it or let it alone; and on the contrary, every action, whoſe exiſtence or non exiſtence does not depend on our will, cannot be

this ſection will be taken up in ſhewing, that Mr. Edwards, though he admits *animal* and *external* liberty, denies *moral*,

be imputed to us. Obſerve here, that omiſſions are ranked by civilians and moraliſts among the number of actions; becauſe they apprehend them as the effect of a voluntary ſuſpenſion of the exerciſe of our faculties.——

We may impute to a perſon every action or omiſſion, of which he is the *author* or *cauſe*, and which he could or ought to have done or omitted.——

With regard to another perſon's actions, they cannot be imputed to us, but in as much as we have concurred to them, and as we could and ought to have procured, hindered, or at leaſt directed them after a certain manner. The thing ſpeaks for itſelf. For to impute another man's actions to a perſon, is declaring that the latter is the *efficient*, though not the only cauſe thereof; and conſequently that this action depended in ſome meaſure on his will, either in its principle or execution.——

It is not ſufficient to have enlightened the mind in reſpect to the nature of thoſe goods and evils that are capable of rendering us really happy or unhappy; we ſhould likewiſe give *activity* and *efficacy* to theſe principles, by forming the will ſo as to determine itſelf by taſte and habit, purſuant to the counſels of enlightened reaſon. And let no one think it impoſſible to change our inclinations, or to reform our taſtes. It is with the taſte of the mind, as with that of the palate. Experience ſhews, that we may alter both, ſo as to find pleaſure at length in things that before were diſagreable to us. We begin to do a thing with pain, and by an effort of reaſon; afterwards we familiariſe ourſelves to it by degrees; then a frequency of acts renders it eaſier to us, the repugnance ceaſeth, we view the thing in a different light from what we did before; and uſe at length makes us love a thing that before was the object of our averſion.——

——Our mind inclines naturally to that ſide which ſeems the moſt probable; but this does not debar it from ſuſpending its aſſent, in order to ſeek for new proofs, or to refer the whole enquiry to a future opportunity.——

In reſpect to things that are evident. It is always in our power to apply our minds to the conſideration of thoſe things, or elſe to divert them from thence, by transfering ſomewhere elſe our attention. This firſt determination of the will, by which it is led to conſider or not to conſider the objects that occur to us, merits particular notice, becauſe of the natural influence it muſt have on the very determination, by which we conclude to act or not to act, in conſequence of our reflexion and judgment. Secondly, we have it likewiſe in our power to *create*, as it were, evidence in ſome caſes, by dint of attention and enquiry; whereas at firſt ſetting out, we had only ſome glimmerings, inſufficient to give us an adequate knowledge of the ſtate of things. In fine, when we have attained this evidence, we are ſtill at liberty to dwell more or leſs on the conſideration thereof; which is alſo of great conſequence, becauſe on this depends its greater or leſſer degree of impreſſion.——

To

ral, and in a few curſory obſervations on this part of his ſcheme. He

To prove that man is indeed a free agent—let us therefore conſult only ourſelves. Every one finds that he is maſter, for inſtance, to walk or ſit; to ſpeak or hold his tongue. Do not we alſo experience continually, that it depends entirely on ourſelves to ſuſpend our judgment, in order to proceed to a new enquiry? Can any one ſeriouſly deny, that in the choice of good and evil our reſolutions are unconſtrained; that, notwithſtanding the firſt impreſſion, we have it in our power to ſtop of a ſudden, to weigh the arguments on both ſides, and to do, in ſhort, whatever can be expected from the freeſt agent.—I find I can abſtain from any particular good; I can defer uſing it; I can prefer ſomething elſe to it; I can heſitate in my choice, in ſhort, I am my own maſter to chuſe, or, which is the ſame thing, I am *free*—

Senſible proofs like theſe are ſuperior to all objection, and productive of the moſt inward conviction, by reaſon it is impoſſible, that when the ſoul is modified after a certain manner, it ſhould not feel this modification, and the ſtate which conſequently attends it. What other certainty have we of our exiſtance? And how is it we know that we think, we act, but by our inward ſenſe?

This ſenſe of liberty is ſo much the leſs equivocal, as it is not momentary or tranſient: It is a ſenſe that never leaves us, and of which we have a daily and continual experience—Reflections, deliberations, reſearches, actions, judgments; all ſuppoſe the uſe of liberty. Hence the ideas of good and evil, of vice and virtue: hence, as a natural conſequence, ariſes praiſe or blame, the cenſure or approbation of our own, or other people's conduct. The ſame may be ſaid of the affections and natural ſentiments of men towards one another, as friendſhip, benevolence, gratitude, hatred, anger, complaints and reproaches: None of theſe ſentiments could take place unleſs we were to admit of liberty. In fine, as this prerogative is in ſome meaſure the key of the human ſyſtem, he that does not allow it to man, ſubverts all order, and introduceth a general confuſion.

It is natural here to enquire, how it was ever poſſible for any body ſeriouſly to doubt, whether man is maſter of his own actions, whether he is free? I ſhould be leſs ſurprized at this doubt, were it concerning a ſtrange or remote fact, a fact that was not tranſacted within ourſelves. But the queſtion is in regard to a thing, of which we have an internal immediate feeling, a conſtant and daily experience. Strange, that any one ſhould call in queſtion a faculty of the ſoul! May not we as well doubt of the underſtanding and will, as of the liberty of man? For if we are content to abide by our inward ſenſe, there is no more room to diſpute of one than of the other. But ſome too ſubtile philoſophers, by conſidering this ſubject in a *metaphyſical* light, have ſtript it, as it were of its nature; and finding themſelves at a loſs to ſolve a few difficulties, they have given a greater attention to theſe difficulties than to the poſitive proofs of the thing; which inſenſibly led them to imagine that the notion of liberty was all an illuſion.—We are informed by experience, that in ſeveral things which, in reſpect to us are inveſted with the higheſt degree of certainty, there are many difficulties

He defines liberty thus: "Liberty is power, opportu-
" nity or advantage that any one has to do as he pleaſeth.
" If he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder
" his *purſuing* and *executing* his will, the man is fully and
" perfectly free." Whence it is manifeſt, that Mr. Edwards had no other notion of liberty than what reſpects external action or conduct. * The pleaſure of the mind, and acting or conducting according to it, are entirely different. The *act of volition* or *choice* is a different thing from the *purſuit* or *execution* of what is willed or choſen. And if liberty conſiſts in the latter only, it cannot be at all requiſite to moral agency and accountableneſs. There may be a willing or an unwilling mind when there is not "power, opportunity or advantage for one to do as he pleaſeth." And moral agents, it is conceded, may be worthy of praiſe or blame in caſes where they *cannot* execute their wills, by reaſon of external *impediment or reſtraint*---and in caſes where they are *compelled* to act contrary to their wills. And where natural neceſſity doth not take place, it is conceded, that virtue or vice conſiſts not in the external doing or forbearing, but in the ſtate and diſpoſition of the mind or will. Now as, on Mr. Edwards's principles, the whole of liberty conſiſts in a " power or opportunity to do as one pleaſeth---to *purſue and execute* his will;" it clearly follows, that liberty, according to his definition of it, is not eſſential to virtue or vice, praiſe or blame. Yet he affirms it is neceſſary and eſſential hereto.

Mr. Edwards's reaſoning on this point, reduced to proper form, will ſtand thus: Liberty is eſſential to praiſe or blame. Liberty conſiſts in a man's purſuing and executing his will. Ergo, If he he cannot execute his will, he

ficulties notwithſtanding, which we are incapable of reſolving to our ſatisfaction: And this is a natural conſequence of the limits of the mind. Let us conclude therefore from hence, that when a truth is ſufficiently evinced by ſolid reaſons, whatever can be objected againſt it, ought not to ſtagger or weaken our conviction, as long as they are ſuch difficulties only as embarraſs or puzzle the mind, without invalidating the proofs themſelves.

Burlamaqui's principles of law, Vol. I. p. 17, 18; 24—27; 34, 35; 59, 60; 238; 248; 258.

* Thoſe who deſire particular ſatisfaction that Mr. Edwards held no other liberty may examine p. 38, 39, 40; 76, 77; 132; 189; 194; 213; 214, 215; 234; 236; 259.—&c. &c.

he cannot be worthy of praiſe or blame. Would Mr. Edwards abide by this conſequence ? If not, let any one reſcue his doctrine from it.

In truth, whether moral agents ſhall execute their wills depends not on themſelves. Their natural liberty may be abridged or taken away, and yet their freedom as accountable creatures remain. If then liberty be really neceſſary to praiſe or blame, it muſt conſiſt in a power either to chuſe or refuſe that wherein virtue and vice conſiſt. And conſequently the will itſelf, its ſtate, volitions or acts, muſt be determined by moral agents themſelves---at leaſt in ſome inſtances, and within a certain meaſure. There is no occaſion to add any thing further to what we before wrote on this point, Examination part I. ſect. 3. and part III. ſect. 1.

But admitting Mr. Edwards maintained *internal* freedom : We aſk, of what ſort ? *moral* freedom, or only *animal ?* The latter may be called *natural* liberty, as well as the freedom of the executive powers be ſo denominated. But it is not eſſential to praiſe or blame. Ideots, lunatics and brutes have this liberty, but are not therefore moral agents. Virtue or vice, reward or puniſhment depend not on the having this liberty. Yet Mr. Edwards admits no other. If he means any thing by the *freedom of the ſoul as a moral agent*, it is this, that moral agents are ſo framed, have ſuch diſpoſitions con-created with them, or infuſed into them by the author of their beings, that they exerciſe freely what is created with or infuſed into them, and can do no otherwiſe. The ſtate and bias of the mind, the particular bent of their wills, by which all their purſuits are determined, is fixed by neceſſity. As ſuppoſe one hath a propenſity to intemperance; another to uncleanneſs, a third to theft, a fourth to covetouſneſs and extortion, a fifth to pride, malice or revenge, &c. in exerciſing, purſuing or executing theſe different paſſions they are reſpectively free, they act as they pleaſe, or according to their will ; but have no hand in the *formation* of theſe various propenſities. "Let "them come by their" ſeveral inclinations and propenſities "*how they will*, yet if they are able, and there is no- "thing in the way to hinder their *purſuing* and *executing* them

them, they are fully and perfectly free." † So are the different ſpecies of animals, who purſue and execute their peculiar propenſities--who follow nature--that is the inſtincts and diſpoſitions implanted in them by the author of nature. We may venture to challenge any man to point out the leaſt material difference between *animal* and *moral* agency on Mr. Edwards's ſcheme of liberty.

There is a near reſemblance between his ſentiments on this point, and thoſe of a late writer. *

" Our actions proceed from our wills, *but our wills muſt*
" *be derived from the natural diſpoſitions implanted in us by*
" *the author of our being:* Wrong elections proceed from
" wrong apprehenſions, or unruly paſſions; and *theſe from*
" *our original frame or accidental education.* Theſe muſt deter-
" mine all our actions, for we have no power to act dif-
" ferently, theſe previous circumſtances continuing exact-
" ly the ſame. Had God tho't proper to have made all
" men with the ſame heads, and the ſame hearts, which he
" has given to the moſt virtuous of the ſpecies; they would
" all have excelled in the ſame virtues: Or had the bias
" implanted in human nature drawn as ſtrongly towards
" the good ſide, as it now apparently does towards the bad,
" it would have operated as ſucceſsfully, and with as little
" infringment on human liberty. *Men*, as well as all o-
" ther *animals*, are *exactly fitted for the purpoſes they are de-*
" *ſigned for*; *and have inclinations and diſpoſitions given them*
" *accordingly*. He who implanted patience in the lamb,
" obedience in the horſe, fidelity in the dog, and innocen-
" ce in the dove, might as eaſily have inſpired the breaſt
" of man with theſe and all other virtues; and then his
" actions would certainly have correſponded with his for-
" mation. *Therefore, in the ſtrict philoſophical ſenſe, we have*
" *certainly no free-will; that is, none independent of our frame;*
" *our natures, and the author of them.*" ‡

Other things belonging to the general ſubject of this ſection we intended to have added; but as they will naturally enough fall under the next branch of our deſign, we will relieve the reader's patience for the preſent.

SECTION

† P. 40. * Mr. Some Jennings, of the board of trade, &c.
‡ Letters on origin of evil, p. 99, 100, 101.

SECTION II.

On the influence of motives in moral volitions.

THE near relation this part of our ſubject hath to the preceeding naturally leads us to ſuch obſervations as may be explanatory of the things already offered, and ſtrengthen their evidence: While what hath been ſaid may anſwer the ſame purpoſe with reſpect to what we ſhall now offer on the relation motives have to the volitions of moral agents.

The whole diſpute turns on the deciſion of this queſtion, Whether moral agents have a principle of *efficiency* in themſelves? In what follows, we ſhall endeavor further to ſupport the affirmative.

By motives we mean external reaſons or inducements exhibited to the view of a moral agent. Mr. Edwards, in a more general way, intends (as we ſuppoſe) an extrinſic moral cauſe, by the term motive. *

He affirms motives to be moral cauſes, by way of diſtinction

* We are very ſenſible he had no *fixed* meaning to this word in his writings. We took notice of his vague and arbitrary uſe and application of it, Examination ſect. 2. part I —particularly p. 26. marg. In the ſenſe he ſometimes uſeth the word [motive] it is not *extrinſic* to the mind, nor even *antecedent* to volition, nor *diſtinct* from it—conſequently, hath not a *tendency* to excite volition, is not the *cauſe*, nor ſo much as the *occaſion* of it. To ſpeak of the *preponderation and prevalency* of motive implies that the mind is already determined; that its choice is made. And hence a preponderating, prevalent motive is not the determiner of the mind's election. The cauſe of this is ſtill to be ſought ſomewhere elſe. One while Mr. Edwards blends motive and volition—at another time he makes the former the moral cauſe of the latter—then again intimates that motive is not a proper *efficient*, but only an *occaſion* of volition—then turns about and blends perception and action.

tinction from natural cauſes ; and, according to his reaſoning, they produce their effects in the ſame way---that is, through the divine energy. Moral effects neceſſarily follow the *efficiency* of their cauſe---moral cauſes are as *abſolute* as natural. (P. 103 ; 261, &c.)

It might be abundantly ſhewn that Mr. Edwards aſcribes efficiency to motives, from his whole book ; and more eſpecially from Part II. Sect. 10. But we ſhall only quote the following from p. 134, 135. in confirmation hereof. " If motives excite volition, then they are the " CAUSE of it's being excited---To excite, is poſitively to " *do* ſomething ; and certainly that which does ſomething, " is the CAUSE of the thing *done* by it. To create, is to " cauſe to be created ; to make, is to cauſe to be made--- " to quicken, is to cauſe to be quickened ; and *to excite*, " is *to cauſe to be excited.* To excite, is to be a cauſe in the " moſt *proper* ſenſe, not meerly a negative occaſion, but a " ground of exiſtence by poſitive influence. The notion " of *exciting*, is exerting influence to cauſe the effect to " ariſe or come forth into exiſtence---The *production* of an " effect is certainly the *cauſing* of an effect ; and *productive influence* is *cauſal influence*, if any thing is ; and that " which has this influence prevalently, ſo as thereby to " become the ground of another thing, is a cauſe of that " thing, *if there be any ſuch thing as a cauſe.*" Thoſe who are ſtill diſpoſed to queſtion whether Mr. Edwards aſcribes cauſality or efficiency to motives may call to mind the ſtory he tells of the animal in *Terra del Fuego.* (p. 282.)

However, we ſee not what advantage can accrue to Mr. Edwards's ſcheme, or what injury to our own, ſhould it be granted, that upon his plan motives are not, in a ſtrict ſenſe, the cauſe of moral volitions. For if ſo, what was he about when he wrote his book ? Was it not his declared deſign to point out the cauſe of volition ? Doth he not labour abundantly to prove, that this cauſe muſt evermore be that motive, which, in the view of the agent, is higheſt ? If by this moral cauſe, as he ſpeaks, nothing more be meant than the *occaſion* of volition, not the cauſe in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe, how has he then anſwered the queſtion propoſed, viz. " What determines the will ? To

ſay

ſay that motive is the occaſion of the will's determination, is nothing to the purpoſe. We want to be directed to the *efficient*. This enquiry is of no leſs importance than it is to know the proper cauſe of every moral event. If Mr. Edwards did not ſuppoſe motives to be efficient cauſes, volition can have no ſuch cauſe at all on his ſcheme.---In other words, there could be no ſuch effect as a moral volition. For a moral effect cannot exiſt without a cauſe any more than a natural effect: And Mr. Edwards denieth that the ſubject of ſuch volition, can be the efficient or producer of it. So that to deny motives efficiency to produce volition, is, upon his principles, to ſay, that all moral events are without a cauſe---rather, that there are no ſuch events exiſting.

Should it be ſaid, that creatures to whom moral agency belongs are the proper efficients of their own volitions, this would be directly to admit our doctrine---to aſſert a ſelf-determining power, and make this the foundation of praiſe and blame, rewards and puniſhments. Should it be ſaid that the firſt cauſe is the proper efficient of every moral volition, this would rather increaſe than relieve the difficulty. For it equally militates with Mr. Edwards's ſcheme to ſuppoſe a ſelf-determining power in the creator, as in the creature. And then to aſcribe the ſinful volitions of creatures to divine efficiency, is to affirm that God is the proper cauſe and author of wickedneſs. In every view Mr. Edwards's ſcheme is ſtrangely embarraſſed. It is conceded, that every moral volition hath an efficient cauſe. And is it a trivial point whether this cauſe be ſuppoſed to be in the ſubject of ſuch volition, or extrinſic to him?

As, on Mr. Edwards's principles, the efficient cauſe of the moral volitions of creatures muſt be either extrinſic motive, or God himſelf through the intervention of motive, each of theſe caſes ſhall be diſtinctly examined: And if neither of them can be maintained, the other opinion muſt be the truth, that moral agents are the cauſe of their own volitions.

Now it cannot be that motives are themſelves efficient cauſes. For an efficient muſt needs be an agent. A moral

ral efficient must be a moral agent. "Abstract notions "(as all reasons and motives are") are not agents. Or should it be said that moral agency belongs to them, it would no way serve Mr. Edwards's cause. For if motives are agents, then they are themselves determined by motive. To be an efficient is to act, and action implies agency. If motives are not agents, then either the subject of a moral volition is also the moral cause of it, or some other agent is that cause. To say some other agent is the cause, is either to ascribe self-determination to this supposed cause, or to run back the efficient of volition *in infinitum*.

Mr. Edwards himself saith, that the act of volition is determined *always* by that in the mind's view of an object, which *causeth it to appear* most agreable, not by the agreable appearance *itself*; for this, in his opinion, is nothing *distinct* from volition (P. 11, 12.) This matter was particularly considered, Examination, part I. sect. 2. To save the reader (and ourselves also) the trouble of repetition, we beg leave to refer moreover, to the notes p. 91,---95.

If motives are not themselves efficients, let us next enquire, whether God is the efficient cause of all moral volitions in the creatures through the medium of motives. Now in a moral estimation, it makes no difference, whether the Deity be the *immediate* or *mediate* cause of sin and moral turpitude. To say he is the efficient in either sense is equally and infinitely reproachful to him. To say, the will necessarily follows the last dictate of the understanding---that the understanding follows the appearance of things * and that these appearances are all minutely ordered

* Objection: "It is not in our power to perceive things otherwise than as they offer themselves to our mind; now our judgments are formed on this perception of things; and it is by these judgments that the will is determined: The whole is therefore necessary and independent of liberty."

Answer. "This difficulty carries little more with it than an empty appearance. Let people say what they will, we are always at liberty to open or shut our eyes to the light; to exert, or relax our attention. Experience shews, that when we view an object in different lights, and determine to search into the bottom of matters, we descry several things that escaped us at first sight. This is sufficient to prove that there is an exercise of liberty in the operations of the understanding, as well as in the several actions thereon depending."

Burlamaqui principles of laws, vol. 1. p. 19.

ed and disposed by the governor of the world, is ultimately to ascribe all moral evil to his efficiency. But how consistently with his moral character? For can it be that the efficient cause of wickedness is not wicked?

Suppose a parent, who had given it in charge to a child, be sure to shun this and the other vice, should yet lay before such child the strongest temptations to the vices caution'd against, would not the child naturally conclude that the parents admonitions are only words of course? that he shou'd not affront, but please his parent, by listning to the enticements of his own proposing? Would not all men lay the blame to the parent for seting invincible temptations before a child? Now the supposition that the parent of the world exhibits to the minds of his rational offspring, in an irresistible manner, motives to vice, is really more reproachful, since (by supposition) 'tis through his operation and efficiency with them that vice is produced, as the necessary effect. Doth the father of angels and men (who compared with him are children in understanding) seduce them in this manner, taking advantage of their ignorance and weakness, and exert his own influence for their ruin? When Mr. Edwards says, "God is the source "of all moral ability and agency," (p. 42.) doth he mean that he is the source of all moral evil? There is a sense in which this observation is doubtless true. But if a divine efficiency in sinful volitions was meant to be compreheded under it, this is greatly to err.

But if motives are not efficient causes, nor the Deity through the intervention of them, then moral agents themselves are. If the cause of volition be not extrinsic, it must be intrinsic, in the agent himself; which is to say, in other words, that moral agents are self-determined.

By affirming this we mean not, however, to deny the influence of motives in moral volitions. We may admit the operation of motives on moral agents without attributing causality to motives. They are reasons exhibited to us to determine ourselves by; but are not moral causes, as hath been shewn from the nature of them, and from Mr. Edwards's own doctrine on the article of motives.

Still it may be said, If moral agents *invariably* determine themselves

themſelves according to the greateſt apparent good, this effectually eſtabliſheth the doctrine of moral neceſſity; and, conſequently, proves that the higheſt motive *neceſſitates* volition, if it be not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the *cauſe* of it.

This matter requires a careful examination. For without determing at preſent, whether a principle of cauſation in the mind or agent, in diſtinction from motive, is or is not reconcileable with moral neceſſity; the admiſſion of this would, doubtleſs, much weaken the evidence of the point we contend for. It muſt be allowed, that if the volitions of moral agents *always* are *as the greateſt apparent good is*, this amounts to a proof of neceſſity in the *philoſophic* ſenſe of the word. Is there, then, ſuch a conſtant and unfailing connection or coincidence between volition and the greateſt apparent good, as is pretended? We are clear in the opinion there is not.

Neceſſity is uniform and fixed: † On the ſuppoſition of it, no moral agent can ever chuſe or act differently from what he doth. A *ſingle* inſtance, therefore, of the beforementioned coincidence failing, wholly ſubverts the doctrine of neceſſity. Now two inſtances of this kind were produced and inſiſted on in our examination of Mr. Edwards, viz. the apoſtacy of angels and mankind. They were under no moral neceſſity of apoſtatizing. Mr. Edwards ſeems to admit their fall might have been prevented. Conſequently, liberty may be diſtinguiſh'd from moral neceſſity. We believe no tolerable anſwer can be given to theſe inſtances. What hath been already ſaid upon them is ſufficient, till ſomething is offered to invalidate or weaken the evidence ariſing from them. ‡

Should it be admitted that motives may, *in ſome caſes*, be exhibited in ſo ſtrong a light, that the mind in which they are extant could not but make the choice it doth; yet unleſs this can be ſhewn to hold true in *every* inſtance, the doctrine of neceſſary determination cannot be ſupported. Admitting, for inſtance, this irreſiſtible exhibition of motives to take place, with reference to angels and glorified ſpirits in heaven, and in ſome caſes of good men on earth,

† Edwards 101, 102; 110. Examination 118.
‡ Examination p. 10, 11, 12; 53, 54; 99,—103; 109, 110.

earth, and *vice verſa*; it will not follow that the ſame thing muſt hold true as a general principle in regard to mankind upon trial. It was not fact in reference to apoſtate ſpirits, and mankind in their firſt ſtate.

We have not pretended to ſtate the *degree* of moral liberty, or *ſphere* of its exerciſe by moral agents. All that we have argued for is this, that accountable creatures either have, or at leaſt originally had, a freedom to chuſe *differently* from what they do. This is no more than the generality of reformed divines have maintained. A liberty of *indifference* we have no where aſſerted. For though we agree with Dr. Watts and ſome other writers, who uſe this term, in the thing they intend by it; yet as we do not entirely approve the manner of expreſſion, ſo we have never once uſed this term to expreſs our ſenſe of liberty.

Mr. Edwards repreſents thoſe writers who argue for a liberty of indifference, particularly Dr. Watts, as meaning hereby two contrary things, neither of which was their ſentiment. He more generally would have it, that they mean *perfect* indifference, or *equilibrium*. But he has alſo intimated by his own uſe of the word, (p. 9.) that his opponents mean, by indifference, ſomething neither *agreable* nor *diſagreable*, eligible or the contrary. Theſe are two notions of indifference, altogether diverſe, and even contrary. (One thing may be far from being *abſolutely* indifferent, while another is preferable.) However, neither of theſe was the notion of indifference maintain'd by the authors Mr. Edwards oppoſeth. The ſenſe in which they aſſert liberty of indifference is preciſely this---a freedom in moral agents to chuſe *otherwiſe* than they do---what was called in the ſchools, *Libertas indifferentiæ ad oppoſita*, "a liberty of indifference to chuſe one thing, or its "oppoſite." Such a ſenſe of liberty is ſo far from being the peculiar notion of "*Pelagians*, *Semi-Pelagians*, *Jeſuits*, "*Socinians*, *Arminians*, and others" of the ſame ſtamp, as Mr. Edwards injuriouſly repreſents, * that it has been maintained by the moſt eminent divines called *Calviniſts*, as we ſhall be ready to ſhew ſhould there be occaſion. The examples of ſuch a liberty, in the defection of beings made upright, are far from being the only ones that might be adduced

* P. 89.

adduced---but they are ſufficient in the controverſy with Mr. Edwards. *.

Virtuous or vicious elections muſt proceed upon motive. And we grant that the greateſt good really *ought* to determine moral agents ; but that it in fact always *doth*, even where it is perceived, we deny. Where there is both a *real* and *evident* preferableneſs, there can be no diſpute as to the *obligations* of moral agents. But even where there is a manifeſt as well as real preference, their election is not *always* governed hereby. 'Tis too common, indeed, that the paſſions bias and pervert the moral judgment. Sometimes they *precipitate* this judgment, when a little reflection would have been ſufficient to preſerve the rectitude of it. Sometimes they blind and corrupt this judgment by *retarding*

* We might mention inſtances of the will's determination, in which there is no *perceptible* preference, either in the object itſelf fixed upon, or in the circumſtances of it. If there is no apprehended preference, or perceivable reaſon for chuſing, between two objects, the mind muſt ſuſpend it's determination forever, according to Mr. Edwards. For "whatever is a motive muſt be ſomething *extant in the view of the perceiving faculty*." (P.8.) Yet Mr. Edwards admits, that two or more given things may appear "*exactly alike, one as good as another*—as ſuppoſe two eggs, or two cakes"—there is no preference, at leaſt none perceived by the mind, as he allows, in theſe caſes. Is then the will determined by, or *as* the greateſt apparent good in ſuch inſtances ? He muſt ſuppoſe ſo. And indeed he inſiſts, that in all ſuch inſtances the mind hath two or more *general* determinations, before it comes to a *particular* determination or choice. He ſuppoſeth the mind hath a real preference, if not of the object choſen, yet of its own action—that it gives itſelf up (very *deliberately*) to *accident*. (Doth he mean, that this is done with an expectation that *chance* will direct the mind to the wiſeſt choice ?) Is not this trifling ! If there be no apprehended preference, the mind cannot determine, or be determined at all, by his principles. In the inſtances he had before him, he grants there is no apprehended preference of one object to the other. Here he obſerves, "The very act of chuſing one thing rather than another, is "preſering that thing." What *preference* is there in the inſtances refered to ? On what *ground* or *reaſon* is one choſen ? To ſay there is an act of choice, implying *preference*, between two objects *exactly alike* in every apparent reſpect, and yet no previous ground or reaſon of that preference, is very hardly reconcileable with Mr. Edwards's ſcheme, or common ſenſe. We believe it will not be doubted by the generality of mankind, but innumerable inſtances occur every day of the will's determination without any perceptible preference. There are determinations, which we beg leave to call *arbitriums*,—implying no prepollency

tarding it, (in the manner obſerved in the preceeding ſection) to find out palliations, excuſes, or juſtifying circumſtances for vice, that men may indulge their various luſts, and yet be on good terms with their conſciences. By ſuch means, the light in men becomes darkneſs; they call evil good, and good evil; put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter.

Still we think nothing is more evidently falſe than the opinion, that the affections evermore follow the laſt practical judgment of the underſtanding. Perception and volition are as different as ſight and taſte. Moral agents many times ſin immediately againſt preſent light and conviction, while they have *full in their view* the wiſer choice. And what is this but to determine themſelves contrary to the greateſt apparent good? Through the impetuoſity of their luſts and paſſions, they break over the cleareſt bonds, natural,

prepollency of motive—not excited by the *greateſt apparent* good, nor *as* this is—nor the contrary; with reſpect to which the mind is *in æquilibrio*. However, ſuch *arbitriums* ſeem not to belong to the ſubject of *morality* and *religion*. They ſtill ſubvert Mr. Edwards's ſcheme of neceſſary connection.

"The exerciſe of liberty," ſays the learned Burlamaqui, "never "diſplays itſelf more than in indifferent things. I find, for inſtance, "that it depends entirely on myſelf to ſtretch out or draw back my "hand; to ſit down or to walk; to direct my ſteps to the right or "left, &c. On theſe occaſions, where the ſoul is left entirely to it-"ſelf, either for want of external motives, or by reaſon of the oppo-"ſition, and, as it were, the equilibrium of theſe motives, if it deter-"mines on one ſide, this may be ſaid to be the pure effect of its "pleaſure and good will, and of the command it has over its own "actions." Vol. I. p. 20, 21.

As to the mind's giving itſelf up to *accident*, this caſe is wrongly ſtated. Where the mind has a full perſuaſion there is no preferableneſs of one obſect to another, is inſtantly convinc'd they are exactly alike, it cannot be ſaid to give itſelf up to accident. It hath no choice or preference, is perfectly indifferent (not whether it hath *either*, but) *which* it hath. It doth not tarry to make one general reſolution after another before it comes to a concluſion; but determines immediately. If the mind may be ſaid to give itſelf up to accident at all, it is in inſtances where it is well known in general, that the iſſue of its determination may be either fortunate or unfortunate; but neither being extant in the minds view beforehand, and the event being altogether independent of any human circumſpection, the mind determines without a perception of the conſequences—which it leaves to time and fortune. As in purchaſing tickets in a lottery.

To pretend, that though the mind has no preference of the *object* choſen, in things indifferent, yet it hath of it's own *act*, is frivolous.

natural, civil and religious---the force of which they have ſometimes a lively ſenſe of even in the article of ſining; perceiving the direct tendency of ſuch violations to ruin them in this world and another. So far are they from acting on the view of the greateſt apparent good, that they have a preſent ſight of the ruinous conſequences of that raſh and mad conduct they determine upon.

Every delaying ſinner acts againſt the greateſt apparent good, while he promiſeth himſelf a future time of repentance, and repenteth not immediately. When ſuch hear the importance and excellency of religion repreſented in ſome judicious moral diſcourſe, or ſee the ſame exemplified in real life, they highly approve it in their judgment; they ſee it to be their wiſdom; but their practice is at variance with the *apparent* good---So much at variance, that they are obliged to make ineffectual promiſes of becoming wiſe ſoon, and are much diſſatisfied with themſelves that they have not been long ago. The ſituation of many great ſinners on a ſick bed, in the apprehenſion of death, is wont to alarm others of a like character. They ſee the right and good way; but perſiſt in their ſins againſt their *evident* intereſt.

Different conſiderations are adapted to influence different perſons, who have diverſe apprehenſions of intereſt, according to the diverſity of their temper and talents, education and circumſtances. But to confound all diſtinction between motives and moral habits, as Mr. Edwards doth, is to blend things that differ---to contradict reaſon and himſelf. For he tells us, volition *follows* perception, is *excited* by it, and the *effect* of it---that motives are *extrinſic* cauſes. Surely then they are different from volition. And if (as has been ſhewn) volition is not *always* as the higheſt motive; then, when theſe really meet, it is not *neceſſarily*; that is, not in the way Mr. Edwards contends for. One inſtance failing, the chain is broken. One link, or "10,000, breaks the chain alike."

Motives exhibited to a moral agent may be ſtrong or weak according to the attention given to them. Moſt preſumptuous ſins may proceed from ſudden paſſion or inattention. It has been hinted, that Adam's firſt ſin may

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be accounted for in this way. And if the *manner* of the mind's viewing an object may be the cause of its chusing or refusing, (as Mr. Edwards observes) we enquire, Whence is it, but from a cause *in itself*, that the mind views an object as it doth ?

On Mr. Edwards's scheme and our own, extrinsic motives are concerned, as they have *positive influence*, in moral volitions. The difference is, Mr. Edwards (more generally) teacheth, that they are moral causes, and that the will and the highest motive necessarily unite. We assert, that moral agents are themselves the efficients of their own volitions, and that there is no such necessary union between volition and the highest motive. The advantage our scheme hath may, perhaps, appear from applying the doctrine wherein we are agreed with him to a particular case ---that of the first sinful volition of the prince of darkness. The motive to this volition was extant in his mind. It had *positive influence* to excite and move to the volition. His rebellion was the consequence. Was it therefore the greatest *apparent* good ? Had he a principle of action within himself, either to concur with or reject the exhibited motive ? If he had, then the cause of this volition was in himself, and our doctrine of self-determination is established. If he had not, then let it be granted that the motive exhibited was the efficient of the volition. But what advantage will this concession be to Mr. Edwards's cause ? It follows from it, either that this efficiency is ultimately to be ascribed to God, and that the energy or causality is ultimately his ; (since by his disposing and determining providence such efficacious motive to rebel was presented to the view of an innocent and holy being) or that God himself is properly no moral cause, but subject, as creatures are supposed to be, to some extrinsic efficiency and determination. And indeed this is the true result of Mr. Edwards's scheme. The divine being is not self-determined---is no proper efficient cause. *Fatalists* and *Atheists* will not fail to make improvement on this system. On the subject of moral agency, it is therefore of great importance to keep up a distinction between the *influence* of motives, and *causality* or *efficiency*.

To ſay that volition ſprings from itſelf, is a very different thing from ſaying, that the ſubject is the cauſe of it. Dr. Watts did not deny that volition hath a cauſe, as Mr. Edwards would inſinuate ; but maintain'd, that an intelligent ſpirit is the cauſe of it's own volitions.

Upon the whole, it is agreed that moral agency may conſiſt with the want of ſpontaneous, animal agency, or the liberty of the *executive* powers. Beſides, where there is neither force nor impediment from without, the exertion of our natural powers depends on our being *willing* to exert them ; but whether we are willing, depends not at all on ourſelves. For though "our actions proceed from our "wills," yet "our wills muſt be derived from the diſpo-"ſitions implanted in us by the author of our being." Such is Mr. Edwards's ſcheme. Where, then, is liberty ! where moral agency ! what pre-eminence hath a man above a beaſt ! The lower animals follow the inſtincts and diſpoſitions implanted in them originally, or in which they are "accidentally educated." They have not a moral faculty, indeed : But if this makes only a *conſtitutional* or *adventitious* difference in their elections and actions, it is a difference no way material ; ſince ſuch accidental differences make no beings either virtuous or vicious. It ſeems apparent, that Mr. Edwards has totally excluded liberty from every thing wherein the nature of virtue and vice is properly concerned.

SECTION

SECTION III.

On neceſſity.

TO make his doctrine of univerſal neceſſity conſiſtent with moral agency and accountableneſs, Mr. Edwards inſiſts much on *two* kinds of neceſſity; one of which he calls natural; the other, moral. It is needful to exhibit his doctrine, and make a few remarks thereon, that the reader may judge of the merits of this diſtinction. After which ſome things will be obſerved with a view, if poſſible, to caſt a little light on the abſtruſe ſubject of neceſſity, rendered more abſtruſe than before, by Mr. Edward's refinements and ſubtilties.

He frequently advertiſeth his readers, that when he applieth the term *neceſſity* to moral ſubjects, he uſeth it "as a term of *art*"---that when the words *neceſſary*, *impoſſible*, *irreſiſtible*, *unable*, &c. are applied to moral agency, they are "either uſed in ſome new ſenſe diverſe from their o-" riginal and proper meaning, or with perfect inſignifican-" ce and nonſenſe: For no inability whatſoever, which is " meerly moral, is properly called by the name of inabi-" lity." (P. 21, 22, 232, 287. *et paſſim.*) Did not Mr. Edwards then mean by moral neceſſity any *real* neceſſity? Did he uſe words as "nonſenſically" as other metaphyſicians?

While in common ſpeech no proper neceſſity at all is meant by the uſe of the terms moral neceſſity, * Mr. Edwards

* When in common ſpeech it is ſaid, that any particular things are morally neceſſary, or morally impoſſible, by way of diſtinction from natural neceſſity or impoſſibility, nothing more is intended than to expreſs, on the one hand, the degree of *probability*, or at moſt *moral certainty*, that ſuch events will take place: Or, on the other hand, the *difficulty* that is in the way, and the *moral evidence* that they will not become effect. 'Tis not meant that there is any proper neceſſity in the caſe. When we ſay, We *muſt* do or forbear ſuch things—we *cannot* but do or forbear them—we are *neceſſitated* to do or forbear them, we would only expreſs the ſtrength of obligation upon us, or the ſtrong inducements we are under, in our preſent ſituation and circumſtances, to do or omit them. When we ſay of a man of approved veracity

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wards manifeſtly intends hereby a real neceſſity, and in his definition of moral neceſſity includes what properly belongs to natural---applying to it the following epithets, *infallible*, *unalterable*, *unfruſtrable*, *unavoidable*---and ſaying (P. 30.) "moral neceſſity is as *abſolute* as natural." But let us more particularly attend to his own explanation of the diſtinction between natural and moral neceſſity.

"By *natural neceſſity*, as applied to men, I mean," ſaith he, "ſuch neceſſity as men are under through the force of "natural cauſes; as diſtinguiſhed from what are called "moral cauſes, ſuch as habits and diſpoſitions of the heart, "and moral motives and inducements. By *moral neceſſity* "is meant that neceſſity of connection and conſequence, "which ariſeth from the ſtrength of ſuch moral cauſes as "the ſtrength of inclination, or motives, and the connec-"tion which there is in many caſes between theſe, and "ſuch certain volitions and actions." (P. 29.) To prevent any miſtake of his meaning, he gives us notice of theſe three things. Firſt, that moral neceſſity may be as abſolute and fidelity, that he *cannot* lie, or violate his truſt and engagements, we mean that we have moral certainty he will ſpeak the truth, and be faithful to his promiſes, to the truſt repoſed in him—that we have the higheſt reaſon to think ſo, and no ſuſpicion to the contraty: Not ſuppoſing but it may be barely *poſſible*, however improbable, that he may prove falſe and unfaithful. (For ſuch men ſometimes act unworthy of their general character, to the great ſurprize of their acquaintance.) When it is ſaid of thoſe who have been long accuſtomed to do evil, that they *cannot* learn to do well, by this is only ſignified the extreme difficulty of their reforming; the great improbability of it. We ſometimes ſay, it is next to impoſſible ſuch ſhould be reclaimed, and find their recovery in ſcripture reſembled to a natural impoſſibility. (Jer. XIII. 22.) The meaning is not, that there is any ſtrict neceſſity of their perſiſting in ſin. There have been inſtances of ſuch perſons reclaimed, and there may be again, great as their danger is. Therefore we cannot ſay, 'tis abſolutely certain others of this character will never be reduced; much leſs that there is an abſolute neceſſity of their continuing unreformed. The ſeveral inſtances produced by Mr. Edwards (P. 34.) will all apply againſt himſelf. Habit in many inſtances is indeed ſo ſtrong, that we are wont to call it ſecond nature—obſerving, however, (to prevent confuſion in our ideas) that it is *morally* ſpeaking impoſſible to alter it—*next* to impoſſible—Intimating, by this manner of expreſſing ourſelves, that though it be poſſible, it is in an high degree improbable. Thus by moral neceſſity we mean not a ſtrict neceſſity, but prefix the epithet *moral* to prevent any ſuch inference.

lute as natural neceſſity. Secondly, That moral events are owing to the nature of things. Thirdly, that neceſſity, as applied by him to moral ſubjects, is not uſed according to the original deſign and meaning of the word.

Here we have occaſion to apply Mr. Edwards's own words, P. 287. "'Tis very evident, that in the metaphy-" ſical diſtinction between" natural and moral neceſſity, " due care has not been taken to conform language to the " nature of things, or to any diſtinct clear ideas---which " has occaſioned inexpreſſible difficulty, contention, error " and confuſion." (P. 279.) " Thoſe are a precarious " ſort of demonſtrations, which men build on the mean-" ing they arbitrarily affix to a word; eſpecially when " that meaning is abſtruſe, inconſiſtent, and entirely di-" verſe from the original ſenſe of the word in common " ſpeech." We know of no writer that has uſed words more *arbitrarily*, and *abſtruſely*; or built more *precarious demonſtrations* on ſuch uſe of them. What is offered on the article of neceſſity ſeems peculiarly liable to this exception.

To recur to the diſtinction of natural and moral neceſſity. The great jumble and confuſion of ideas in the aforeſaid explanation is to be regretted.

By " neceſſity of connection and conſequence" we obtain no idea of moral neceſſity as diſtinct from natural. To ſay in explanation hereof, that the volitions of moral agents are connected immediately or mediately with what is neceſſary in its own nature, and ſo are neceſſary by a neceſſity of conſequence, (P. 25; 29.) is ſo far from helping us to diſtinguiſh moral neceſſity from natural, that the attempt to explain doth but confound the diſtinction, which is ſuppoſed to be of much importance. According to this explanation, moral actions are effects of natural neceſſity, when traced up to their true cauſe. For ſaith Mr. Edwards, " Things which are *perfectly connected* with " other things that are neceſſary [in their own nature] are " *themſelves* neceſſary, by a neceſſity of conſequence." The volitions of accountable creatures not being in their own nature neceſſary, are ſo inaſmuch as they are perfectly connected with, and certainly follow from, the divine exiſtence

tence and perfections. As this is to aſſert, that God is the original moral cauſe of ſin, ſo it is finally to aſſert that ſin aroſe from a neceſſity in the nature of things. Do we yet perceive any difference between natural and moral neceſſity, on this ſtate of the matter? The divine exiſtence is eternal, and therefore abſolutely neceſſary in its own nature. * The volitions of creatures are perfectly connected with the divine exiſtence and conduct. And are they not then neceſſary with a natural neceſſity.

Further, What doth Mr. Edwards mean by a *moral* cauſe? ‡ In the paſſage under preſent examination, and through his book, he blends moral motives and inducements with moral habits, inclinations and diſpoſitions, as though they were preciſely the ſame, and indiſcriminately calls them moral cauſes. Here are ſeveral things unintelligible.

Firſt, The *difference* between a moral diſpoſition and a moral volition ſhould have been pointed out. For moral volitions and actions, upon this ſcheme, are immediately connected with moral habits and diſpoſitions as their moral cauſe. Or if there be no difference, then it ſhould have been ſhewn,

Secondly, How the ſame moral habit, which is a moral volition or act, is alſo the moral cauſe of *itſelf*---cauſe and effect at the ſame time, and in regard to the ſame thing---the ſubject of its own efficiency. Were this conceivable, ſtill,

Thirdly, How is a moral habit [or motive] *before* and *previous* to itſelf? How hath it a *tendency*, by poſitive influence and action, to *move* and *excite* to itſelf? How is it the cauſe of that *exertion*, which, by ſuppoſition, is exerted before its influence and motion is applied for the purpoſe?

Fourthly, If motives are nothing diſtinct from moral habits and inclinations, then they are not *extrinſic* cauſes of ſuch

* We enquire not into the *cauſe* of the divine exiſtence, which altogether ſurpaſſeth our perception. Vid. Examination, Part II. Sect. 1.

‡ "We give in general the name of moral cauſe of an action to the *perſon* that produced it, either in the whole or part, by a determination of his will; whether he executes it himſelf phyſically and immediately, ſo as to be the author thereof; or whether he procures it by the act of ſome other perſon, and becomes thereby it's cauſe."

Burlamaqui, Vol. I. P. 238.

ſuch inclinations and habits, as Mr. Edwards often ſtiles them---are not the *medium* of producing ſuch habits.

Fifthly, If moral volitions are connected with their moral cauſe by a neceſſity of *conſequence*, then it ſeems, the cauſe and neceſſity are *prior* to the volitions, and that the volitions themſelves *follow*, as effects follow their cauſes. But how can they be *conſequent*, if a moral motive be a moral diſpoſition, as it is certain a moral diſpoſition is a moral volition? We would, if poſſible, diſcover the *peculiar* connection which Mr. Edwards ſuppoſeth there is between one and the ſame thing, ſo as to diſcern how it is a moral cauſe and a moral effect of---itſelf! We cannot eaſily apprehend what he means by moral neceſſity; or perceive where the difference lies, according to him, between natural and moral neceſſity.

Further, When Mr. Edwards ſaith, that the nature of the connection between moral cauſes and effects is the ſame as in natural cauſes and effects---that they differ only as the terms connected are diſſimilar, this doth but entangle the ſubject ſtill more: For if there be no difference in the nature of the connection; if this be alike indiſſoluble in the one as in the other, is not then the neceſſity the ſame? what proper diſtinction is there between natural and moral neceſſity? Doth he mean alſo to confound natural cauſes and effects as he doth moral? to ſay, in like manner, that a natural effect is the natural cauſe of itſelf? the object of its own influence and action? producer and produced?

Further, This connection between moral volitions and their moral cauſes is ſaid to take place *in many caſes*. If it *ever* fails, how is the connection "ſure and perfect---ac-" cording to eſtabliſhed laws?" If the connection may in *any* caſe be broken, there is no neceſſity. 'Tis not as abſolute, as unfruſtrable as natural neceſſity.

Further, As nothing except the *divine exiſtence and perfections* is neceſſary in itſelf, or in nature; according to Mr. Edwards himſelf; when he ſaith moral neceſſity is as abſolute and irreſiſtible as natural, doth he mean that the moral volitions of creatures are as neceſſary as the exiſtence of God? Apply this to his own doctrine reſpecting the origin

origin of evil, and either the abſoluteneſs of moral neceſſity muſt be given up, or the moral character of the Deity diſbelieved. Was it Adam's original bias and diſpoſition to rebel againſt God? If it was, he was created a rebel. And what tho'ts muſt we entertain of the creator, from whom immediately he derived this bias? Can we diſtinguiſh his being created in ſin from natural neceſſity? If this was not his original diſpoſition, but the contrary, then he was far from being under a neceſſity of ſinning, as abſolute as natural neceſſity---his fall was "not owing to na-"ture."

Or ſuppoſe the firſt ſinful volition really neceſſary in the way Mr. Edwards contends for, what eſſential difference could there be between a neceſſity *without* the will, and a neceſſity *within* it? Evil diſpoſitions originally implanted in the creature, or infuſed into him afterwards, or proceeding from the want of divine influence and aſſiſtance, cannot render the ſubject thereof criminal, nor can properly be called evil as relative to him, as may be ſhewn in the next ſection. To ſay in this caſe, "'Tis his very "nature; he is of a vile natural temper, 'tis as natural "for him to act ſo as it is to breathe; he can't help ſer-"ving the devil," &c. † would be a full excuſe, provided ſuch a nature and temper were originally implanted or infuſed by the creator, or aroſe from the want of his aſſiſtance. And as the firſt ſinful volition was as abſolutely neceſſary as any following ones, and the firſt in the ſeries determineth all the reſt, on Mr. Edwards's plan---as the neceſſity he pleads for is not even pretended to derive from the fall, nor the ſin of Adam once mentioned as the ſource of it, but took place in his innocent ſtate, and was prior to the fall of angels; ſo we may well obſerve, that in the creature's original ſtate a neceſſity *in* the will or *without* it muſt amount to the ſame thing. In ſuch ſtate, to ſuppoſe an indiſpoſition, or moral inability, or oppoſition of will to holineſs would be to admit as full an excuſe as any inability *extrinſic* to the will can be---it would be a proper natural neceſſity---an original defect of powers or advantages to do what was required.

Might

† Edwards, p. 304.

Might not then the fall of angels and man have been prevented? Mr. Edwards has intimated that it might. If ſo, then it is clear, it could not be neceſſary with the irreſiſtible, abſolute neceſſity he pleads for. To ſuppoſe it was *really* neceſſary, though in the loweſt degree, * is the ſame as to ſuppoſe it neceſſary in the higheſt degree, the event being alike ſure on either ſuppoſition. To illuſtrate the matter by an inſtance from Mr. Edwards. Suppoſe a man required to lift a weight of 101 lb. whoſe natural ſtrength is only equal to a weight of 100 lb. he is as really unable to lift 101 as 1000 lb. And it would be as really contrary to reaſon to require him to lift one pound beyond his ſtrength as nine hundred. Was there a moral inability ſimilar to this in our firſt parents in their primitive ſtate? In this caſe "doing wrong with the *will*," or "from "the heart," would be far from being "the ſum total of "the matter," in our eſtimation of blame-worthineſs. (P. 298, 299.) We naturally aſcend to the ſource and fountain of this wrong will or heart, and enquire whether the ſubject had the neceſſary means of willing otherwiſe? If the ſtate of his will or heart was originally fixed by neceſſity, common ſenſe at once acquits him of blame. Were angels and our common progenitors thus abandoned of God!

In the firſt ſin, there was a want or oppoſition of will to what was required by the Creator. Was this want or oppoſition of will neceſſary before the firſt ſin took place? If not, then there was a freedom from moral neceſſity at leaſt with reſpect to the firſt act of ſin. Or if the firſt diſinclination to, and non-compliance with, duty, was founded in neceſſity, who placed the creature under that neceſſity? He muſt have had power originally to preſerve his innocence, or the neceſſity of his forfeiting it muſt have been a natural neceſſity. Which ſide ſoever Mr. Edwards's ſcheme embraceth, it is ſubverted.

To evince the conſiſtency of his doctrine of neceſſity with the higheſt worthineſs of praiſe and moral eſteem, Mr. Edwards takes frequent occaſion to obſerve, that God poſſeſſeth the moſt perfect liberty, and is notwithſtanding

* Moral neceſſity, Mr. Edwards ſuppoſeth, admits of degrees.

neceſſarily holy, &c. In the ſame view he mentions the neceſſity of Chriſt's holineſs. We grant that God is neceſſarily holy---that Jeſus Chriſt is ſo ; but ſee not how this " clearly and abſolutely determines the controverſy,"

For,

Firſt, Mr. Edwards maintains, that the *perfection of the divine underſtanding* is the foundation of the immutable rectitude of his will. Now as the moral intellect in creatures is ſo very imperfect, there can be no infering the neceſſity of their wills from the neceſſity of the divine. Mr. Edwards would not ſay, that the volitions of holy angels are determined to the right ſide in the ſame manner as the divine will is determined to holineſs. For then their knowledge muſt be perfect as his. Or if, notwithſtanding the imperfection of their knowledge, their wills always have been, are, and will be as unalterably determined to holineſs, then it muſt be in ſome *other* way, on ſome other foundation, equally ſure and ſtedfaſt, not yet pointed out. Should it be ſuppoſed further, that they are now confirmed in a ſtate of holineſs beyond the poſſibility of a defection ; yet we conjecture that they (as well as other finite beings) have been, in ſome part of their duration, upon trial in ſuch ſenſe as implies danger of miſcarrying. Beings in their ſituation once, have actually fallen.

Secondly, We have no objection to the opinion, that the rectitude of the divine will is neceſſary. But why this neceſſity ſhould be called *moral*, by way of diſtinction from *natural*, we ſee not. When we diſtinguiſh the moral from the natural perfections of God, we do indeed ſuppoſe that the latter would be no perfections were it not for the former. At the ſame time, there is an evident contradiction in ſuppoſing a being to exiſt, poſſeſſed of the attributes, which for diſtinction's ſake are called the natural perfections of God, without poſſeſſing perfect moral rectitude.

Holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs belong to the divine nature as much as power, omniſcience, immenſity, &c. He is by neceſſity *of nature* holy, juſt and good, no leſs than he is, by the ſame neceſſity, eternal, infinite, omnipotent, omniſcient. When it is ſaid, God *cannot* do wickedly, this is to be underſtood as denoting a ſtrict neceſſity. Who ever

ſays,

ſays, 'Tis *morally* impoſſible for God to lie? as tho' it were *naturally* poſſible. The terms *can*, *cannot*, *neceſſary*, *impoſſible*, &c. as applied to God, denote no leſs a neceſſity of *nature* than of *will*.* Admitting this, 'tis not altogether proper to apply to the divine moral rectitude the diſtinction of natural and moral neceſſity. For to ſay that God is holy by the neceſſity of his will, is the ſame as to ſay he is holy by the neceſſity of his nature.

It doth not, however, follow, from the neceſſity of the divine moral rectitude above aſſerted, that therefore God could have done in no reſpect differently from what he hath. In what properly belongs to moral rectitude, we maintain the neceſſity of the divine will, ſtrictly ſpeaking. But did moral rectitude require there ſhould be exactly ſo many orders of creatures----ſuch a certain number of each order---brought into exiſtence at ſuch certain time and place----endowed with ſuch particular powers and properties----placed in ſuch circumſtances? That there ſhould be exactly ſo many grains of ſand, drops of water, particles of light, &c. &c? The ſcriptures tell us, that God was able to raiſe up children to Abraham from the ſtones. If he was able, then he might have done it. For to ſay he is able to do what contradicts moral rectitude, is to ſay he may deny himſelf, which we know he *cannot*. Omnipotence cannot do any thing contradictory to moral perfection. But this is very different from ſaying, that God actually doth every thing that is poſſible with him.

"To ſay that God has exerted his power or his wiſdom, *ad ultimum poſſe*, ſo that he can proceed no further, is to ſay a great deal too much: But we may with reaſon aſſert, that he has diſcovered infinite wiſdom and infinite power; or in other words, that none but a being poſſeſſed of theſe perfections in the higheſt poſſible degree could have created this ſtupendous univerſe." †

Jeſus Chriſt the righteous is alſo holy with the ſame neceſſity as is above aſcribed to God---not a moral neceſſity.

* "If it be the very nature of God to act juſtly and faithfully, ſo that he cannot will nor act otherwiſe, it may be called, I think, a natural neceſſity, ſince it ſprings from his nature; as well as it may be called a moral one, becauſe it is the action of an intelligent and free agent." Dr. Watts.

† Dr. Eliot's ſermon on natural religion, p. 10, 11.

ty by way of diſtinction from natural, but a real and proper neceſſity. Nor was he upon trial in the ſenſe that implies *danger or poſſibility of miſcarrying*, as finite beings have been and are.

Now to ſay that the holineſs of angels in heaven is, and always was, as infallibly and unalterably neceſſary as the holineſs of God and Jeſus Chriſt, is to ſay they never were capable of ſining---and is to make them equal with God, who chargeth the angels with folly; in whoſe ſight the ſtars are not clean. To ſay, on the other hand, that the defection of angels which fell was unalterably neceſſary, is to ſay they never were able to ſtand in their primitive ſtate; and is to aſcribe their ſin and deſtruction, not to themſelves, but to him who is immutably holy, juſt and good.

There is, indeed, a *qualified* ſenſe in which confirmed angels and perfected ſpirits in heaven may be ſaid to be holy by a neceſſity of nature; having paſſed their trial, and being finally eſtabliſhed in a ſtate of moral rectitude---which admits of endleſs improvement. We may ſay, 'tis their nature to be holy--to be like God. Hence it will follow, that apoſtate ſpirits, and ſuch from among mankind as have died impenitent, having neglected and abuſed the time of their viſitation, are, by a like neceſſity, enemies of righteouſneſs, and cannot but remain ſo. In neither caſe was the neceſſity *original*, but the conſequence of improving well or ill a time of previous trial.

The ſame thing holds, in a lower degree, with reſpect to ſome of mankind in this world. There are thoſe the height of whoſe moral attainments and whoſe eſtabliſhment in the divine life are ſuch, that the allurements and temptations of the world make but a feeble and tranſient impreſſion on them: Whether the regenerate principle be or be not, in its own nature, indefectible, Calviniſtic divines have univerſally maintained, that the promiſe of God ſtands engaged to keep them from falling. On the other hand, there are thoſe who appear to be given over to vile affections--or, if not given up of God to their own heart's luſt, have proceeded ſo far in the paths of error and unrighteouſneſs, their recovery is become ſo extremely diffi-

cult

cult and improbable, that the words of the prophet are applicable to them, *Can* the ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? Long confirmed habit is a kind of ſecond nature: So that both the former and latter may be ſaid to have ſuperinduced on themſelves a ſort of natural neceſſity.

This notion of neceſſity Mr. Edwards appears to recur to through his book. Yet he makes no diſtinction between a neceſſity ſuppoſed to be original, or ſuch as is formed and confirmed by cuſtom or uſe; and the neceſſity of moral volitions under circumſtances altogether diverſe. He proceeds, for example, on the ſuppoſition of a ſtrict, real and abſolute neceſſity in all theſe caſes. The ſins of the unregenerate, under the greateſt illumination and conviction from the ſpirit of God, the ſlips and failings of the regenerate, and the firſt ſinful volition, are as really neceſſary, on his plan, as the crimes of abandoned ſinners and apoſtate ſpirits. "The will is neceſſarily determined, in every one of its "acts, from a man's firſt exiſtence, by a cauſe beſide [with-"out] the will, and a cauſe that don't proceed from, or "depend on, any act of the will at all." †

Who can believe Adam's firſt ſin, or the ſlips and defects of good men on earth, neceſſary with the ſame neceſſity as the perverſe wickedneſs of abandoned ſinners and rebel angels?---that the moral inability of all unregenerate men is the ſame with that of thoſe whom God hath given over to a reprobate mind?---that the means and aſſiſtances of grace, either produce their effect neceſſarily, [irreſiſtibly] or have no tendency to excite to that which is the great end and deſign of them? Did Mr. Edwards believe himſelf in theſe things? that laſt mentioned eſpecially. *

Preparatory and regenerating grace are the operation of the ſame ſpirit. The tranſition from one to the other is not very eaſily diſcerned. 'Tis a nice thing to draw the line exactly between common and ſpecial grace, admitting a ſpecific difference. Can it yet be ſaid of unregenerate men, under thoſe influences of the ſpirit which Mr. Edwards alloweth to perſons in their circumſtances, that their moral

† P. 113.
* Vid, ſermon on preſſing into the kingdom of God.

moral inability is like that of thoſe who have long grieved and quenched the ſpirit, and hereby provoked God to take it from them?

But whatever moral inability belongs to unregenerate men by nature, and notwithſtanding the means and aſſiſtances of grace, nothing is plainer than this, that Calviniſtic divines have ever conſidered the inability of mankind to holineſs as the natural and judicial conſequences of ſin. They ſuppoſe the firſt ſin of Adam to be the ſource of ſuch inability in him, and in his poſterity. They ſuppoſe it was not natural to Adam, but is to his deſcendants. They don't repreſent this inability in the race of Adam as *meerly* moral, but as both natural and moral. They equally aſſert the impotency of the *underſtanding*, as of the *will*. Were there occaſion, this might be abundantly ſhewn. Yet Mr. Edwards, though he maintains the ſame inability in the creature, while innocent, as in fallen creatures, and aſſerts it to be of the moral kind only, all along holds his own doctrine up to view as the doctrine of Calviniſts; and repreſents the oppoſers of it, through his whole book, as Arminians, Pelagians, Socinians, Jeſuits, &c. With what fairneſs, let the public judge. By his own conceſſion Dr. Watts deſerved to be ranked with writers of a very different claſs. Yet the Doctor's eſſay on freedom of will is as diverſe from Mr. Edwards on the will as the Chriſtian's bible is from the Mahometan's. He aſſerted, with the whole current of Calviniſtic divines, both the natural and moral impotency of mankind.* How Mr. Edwards could deny the former conſiſtently with admiting *total* depravity (which he would be ſuppoſed to believe) is utterly inconceivable. And while he affirms it to be the doctrine of Calviniſts, That "there is need of a "*phyſical* operation of the ſpirit of God on the will," in order to regeneration, why doth he repreſent the inability of the unregenerate as *meerly moral?* (P. 111; 232.)

"The moſt rigid predeſtinarians," ſays Profeſſor BEATTIE, "ſuppoſe freedom of will to be in one way or other

"conſiſtent

* Since Mr. Edwards hath ſtigmatized Dr. Watts as an Arminian, &c. in the article of liberty, the admirers of the former have been liberal in loading the Dr. with this reproach. A character ſo reſpectable for general literature, undiſſembled piety and extenſive uſefulneſs, as well as unſuſpected orthodoxy, merited different treatment.

" conſiſtent with eternal and unconditional decrees: If
" they cannot explain in what way, they call it a myſte-
" ry; it ſurpaſſes their underſtanding: But it muſt be ſo;
" for otherwiſe the morality of actions is altogether incom-
" prehenſible." *

In our controverſy with Mr. Edwards, there is, indeed, no occaſion to examine the impotency of fallen man. According to him, Adam in innocence was morally unable to retain the ſpiritual image of God, with which he is ſuppoſed to have been endowed. (This muſt have been, by the way, a natural as well as moral inability---an inability original to him, no leſs in his underſtanding than in his will.) If he had power to have viewed things in a different manner, the ſcheme of neceſſity is overthrown. His firſt want or oppoſition of will to what was required of him was his firſt ſin. How came he by this want or oppoſition of will? It was not original to him, if he was created with the moral image of God. To the efficient cauſe we muſt attribute his firſt indiſpoſition or oppoſition to his duty, whoever or whatever that cauſe be. † 'Tis indeed abſurd to ſay, that after this oppoſition to duty was become effect, he could have annihilated it, or cauſed it not to be. But might he have preſerved the ſame actual will to worſhip and obey God after the exhibition of ſatan's temptation, as before? Did the extancy of this temptation in his mind make or conſtitute him a ſinner? (No ſurely; for our Lord himſelf was tempted by the devil, yet without ſin.) After the temptation was extant, had he an immediate power to call the motives of religion to view, and reſiſt the ſuggeſtions of the adverſary? If not, how could ſin lie at his door? Was his moral inability of his own procuring? or could he remove it? If neither, Mr. Edwards's diſtinction of natural and moral neceſſity muſt appear trifling. " The ſtate of the moral world depends on the uſe they
" make of natural agency, and ſo depends on their voli-
" tions," (Edwards p. 162.) which volitions are independent of themſelves, and proceed from an extrinſic cauſe---even from him who gave them being. On this plan natural

* Beattie on truth p. 310. 3d. edit.
† Edwards, p. 103.

tural beauty or deformity, ſuperior natural underſtanding or the want of common, high or low birth, great wealth or extreme poverty, bodily health or ſickneſs, are as much virtuous or vicious, in relation to the ſubject, as any moral qualities whatever.

Some European writers of late years have made much uſe of the diſtinction of natural and moral neceſſity: But it is manifeſt for *a pretence* only. They plainly ſuppoſe natural and moral neceſſity do not materially differ; and maintain neceſſity in ſuch ſenſe as renders the exiſtence of ſin, even in their *own* apprehenſions, impoſſible. Particularly Mr. Hume, and the author of the letters on the origin of evil. The latter boldly aſſerts, * that "omnipotence "was obliged, either to afflict *innocence*, or be the *cauſe of* "*wickedneſs*; it plainly hath no other option: What then "could infinite wiſdom, juſtice and goodneſs do in this "ſituation more conſiſtent with itſelf, than to *call into being* "*creatures formed with ſuch depravity in their diſpoſitions*, as "to induce many of them to act in ſuch a manner as to "render themſelves proper ſubjects for neceſſary ſuffer-"ings---juſt puniſhments?" Can this author be tho't to be ſerious? Could he believe that creatures *formed wicked originally* may be on that account the objects of *juſt puniſhment?* With the Pagan orator, he reſolves all into divine neceſſity and fatality.

"The ſcheme of neceſſity in the actions of an intelligent "being, or that all our volitions, determinations and ac-"tions proceed from God, as infruſtrable effects from "their proper cauſe, hath hitherto been embraced by a "very few, *except infidels*, and thoſe of the *moſt malignant* "*claſs*, who have very conſiſtently given up the doctrine "of future puniſhment. In this they diſcover that they "have more juſt and honorary thoughts of God, than "thoſe Chriſtians, who firſt make God the author of ſin, "and then repreſent him as inflicting eternal puniſhment "on men for it; for that which is originally, and in ſtrict "conſtruction, his own act." Mr. Howe calls it "a black "conception of God, that he ſhould be ſuppoſed irreſti-"bly to determine the will of man to the hatred of his own

* P. 103, 104.

" own moſt bleſſed ſelf, and then to exact the ſevereſt pun-
" iſhments for the offence done. We ſhould rather chuſe"
" ſays he " to have our ſight, hearing, and motive power,
" or what not beſides, diſputed or even torn away from
" us, than even ſuffer ourſelves to be diſputed into a be-
" lief, that the holy and good God ſhould irreſiſtibly de-
" termine the wills of men to, and puniſh the ſame
" thing. " ‡

Whether *certainty* and *neceſſity* are the ſame, as Mr. Edwards inſiſts, we reſerve for enquiry under the ſection on foreknowledge.

‡ Dr. Eliot's ſermon on natural religion, p. 19. 20.

SECTION IV.

On the origin of evil.

MR. Edwards's opinion on this ſubject is, that "ſin "infallibly followed from God's ordering man's "circumſtances when he made him, and withholding or "withdrawing divine influence and aſſiſtance." This he otherwiſe expreſſeth by ſaying that "ſin aroſe from the im- "perfection which properly belongs to a creature, as "ſuch." ‡ Again to the ſame purpoſe, (p. 365.) "Sin "ariſeth from the withholding of the action and energy of "the moſt High, and---neceſſarily follows on the want of "his influence"---Men never commit ſin, but only when "God leaves them to themſelves, and neceſſarily ſin when "he doth ſo"---(p. 403 ; 405.) "God's own immediate con- "duct is original in the ſeries of events---in his providence "he deciſively ordereth all the volitions of moral agents." Yet he allows not that "ſin is the fruit of any poſitive "agency or influence of the moſt High." Upon the whole, he takes frequent occaſion to illuſtrate his doctrine concerning the exiſtence of ſin by obſerving, that there is a vaſt difference between the *ſun's* being the cauſe of light and warmth in the day, by its preſence and poſitive in- fluence; and its being the occaſion of darkneſs and froſt in the night, by deſcending below the horizon. Hence he ſuppoſeth, that "no action of the divine being is the pro- "per cauſe, efficient or producer of the evil of men's wills."

In theſe things we doubt not it may be made to ap- pear, that he alike contradicts himſelf, and the foundation principles of reaſon and religion.

Firſt, He contradicts himſelf. We ſhall take notice on- ly of two reſpects in which he doth ſo. His own illuſtra- tion of the ſubject goes upon the ſuppoſition,

(1.) That the exiſtence of ſin is the conſequence meerly of

‡ P. 376, 377.

of ſomething *negative* on God's part, or follows from the *want* of his influence, and from this *only*. Whereas Mr. Edwards conſtantly aſſerts, that God is the *determiner*, *orderer*, and *deciſive diſpoſer* of this event. 'Tis not ſufficient with him to ſay, that God is "the permitter, or not a hinderer of ſin;" but he is careful immediately to add, "and "at the ſame time a diſpoſer of the ſtate of events, in ſuch "a manner, that ſin will moſt certainly and infallibly fol-"low." (P. 3 57, 367.) Now is God's *determining*, *ordering* and *actually diſpoſing* things in his providence, in a *deciſive* manner, a meer negative? Doth not his ordering and diſpoſing an event, with all the previous circumſtances, imply ſomething more than *forbearing* to act? even his influence and energy, or active providence therein? Are the *determinations* and *decrees* of God, the *diſpoſitions* of his providence, nothing *poſitive*? Mr. Edwards ſaith expreſsly, "To *direct*, *decide*, or *determine* any thing, is to act." (P. 51.) He connects the *active* and *permiſſive* providence of God---maintains an *efficient* determination of, and *efficacious* providence in ſin.

2. Admit the exiſtence of ſin to be the conſequence, not of any poſitive influence of the deity, but to follow only from his forbearing to influence and aſſiſt the creature, in like manner as darkneſs and froſt in the night follow upon the *departure* of the ſun---admit that God is not the *efficient* cauſe of ſin; it will then follow, that the ſinful being himſelf muſt be this cauſe. Now to ſay that the perpetrator of wickedneſs is the efficient cauſe of it, is to eſtabliſh a power of *ſelf-determination*, contrary to the principal deſign of Mr. Edwards's book. He muſt either maintain the poſitive energy and action of the deity in the introduction of ſin into the world, or elſe admit that it aroſe from a cauſe in the mind of the ſinner---in other words, that he was ſelf-determined. And tho' this would involve his ſcheme in the abſurdity he ſpeaks of, p. 7. that the will "acts and "produceth effects upon itſelf, and is the object of its own "influence and action," yet there is no evading it. The *actor*, *agent*, or *doer* of ſin, as Mr. Edwards ſpeaks, cannot, according to him, be the efficient cauſe of it. Either

then

then the deity is, in this ſenſe, the cauſe and author of ſin, or it hath no proper cauſe at all. *

Secondly, His doctrine is repugnant to the fundamental and moſt important principles of reaſon and religion. It is aſcribing ſin as really, and in as obnoxious a ſenſe, to God, as to affirm, his poſitive agency and efficiency herein. Mr. Edwards would have been more conſiſtent with himſelf, had he embraced the latter opinion. His ſcheme can hang together on no other ſuppoſition. And on this ſuppoſition, the moral perfections and government of God, and revealed religion, muſt be diſbelieved.

But his doctrine reſpecting the manner of ſin's coming into exiſtence ſhall be examined ſomewhat diſtinctly.

If ſin aroſe from God's withdrawing his aſſiſtance and influence, it will then follow that the creature *had originally* ſuch influence and aſſiſtance as was *ſufficient to prevent* apoſtacy. Otherwiſe this would not be the conſequence of the *withdraw* of divine influence, but more properly the conſequence of the *deficiency* of ſuch influence. And the caſe of the ſun's departure from our horizon would be very impertinently uſed to exemplify this event. For ſuppoſe the creature never had ſufficient divine influence and aſſiſtance to ſecure his primitive rectitude, his ſtate would have been analogous to primitive darkneſs and eternal night. And becauſe he did not walk in the light of the ſun, without having ever enjoy'd its enlivening beams, he is conſigned (or obnoxious) to blackneſs of darkneſs forever.

If therefore there is any pertinency in the inſtance Mr. Edwards

* By the cauſe of a moral volition, Mr. Edwards ſaith he ſometimes means only an *antecedent* or *occaſion* of ſuch volition, not any thing "which has a *poſitive efficiency* or influence to *produce*" it—and adduceth the beforementioned inſtance of the ſun in illuſtration. *Quere*, When he affirms that the higheſt motive is the cauſe of, and neceſſarily determineth volition, doth he mean that it is a cauſe in the ſame ſenſe only as the departure of the ſun is the cauſe of darkneſs and froſt in the night? Doth he mean by motive nothing *poſitive*? nothing that *moves* the mind determined by it? nothing that *influenceth*, *ordereth*, *directs* and *diſpoſeth* volition? Or if he really means by it ſome *poſitive influence*, (which ſurely he doth) would he admit that the conduct of the Deity determined the exiſtence of ſin in *this* manner? If not what determinate meaning hath the word *cauſe*, as uſed by him?

Edwards brings, the creature once had ſuch light, influence and aſſiſtance as might have forever ſecured his integrity. Conſequently, the apoſtacy might have been prevented. The only enquiry is, whether it were owing to God, or the creature. Mr. Edwards maintains it was owing to the former. Let us ſee whether his opinion be reconcileable with the wiſdom, holineſs and goodneſs, or even juſtice of God.

To ſay that the apoſtacy was the conſequence of God's forbearing to communicate his influence and aſſiſtance, yet that it was a blameable thing in the creature, is not leſs glaringly falſe and impious than it would be to ſay, that God requires a rational conduct of thoſe whom he hath not endowed with the natural underſtanding of men---or that he requires moral exerciſes and behaviour of the brute creatures---or requires a creature to live after he hath taken away the breath of life. Either would be contrary to reaſon and juſtice---to demand more than was given---contrary to that fixed rule of divine government, To him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance.

Again, we might much more conſiſtently ſuppoſe, that God would have put an end to the exiſtence of a rational creature, than have continued ſuch an one in being and withdrawn his influence, previous to any direct forfeiture on the creatures part. The latter would imply injuſtice: But the former might not. Exiſtence being a free gift at firſt, the continuance of it would have been ſo, had the creature not ſinned. The creator might have diſcontinued it without doing any wrong, even ſuppoſing ſin had not taken place. But to continue the creature in being, and withhold divine influence from him, in conſequence of which he is neceſſarily plunged into a ſtate of ſin, miſery and deſperation, would be to give and continue being on terms worſe than not to be at all. If there is no reaſon for the former ſuppoſition; much leſs is there for the latter.

This doctrine gives us ſuch an idea of the parent of the univerſe as ſhocks the firſt principles of reaſon, and contradicts the cleareſt notices God has given of himſelf by the light of nature and ſcripture. Moral agents are *the off-*

ſpring

ſpring of God. Now is it indeed true, that the *father of the whole family in heaven and earth* caſts off his children before they have done any thing to forfeit his paternal care, or incur his fatherly diſpleaſure? Is *their* forſaking him the conſequence of *his* firſt leaving them? Doth he expoſe them defenceleſs, and caſt them off as orphans, that they may, in conſequence of his dereliction, forget and forſake him, and then be thruſt out from his family, and treated as baſtards and renegades! Is this to repreſent the parent of angels and men in an honorable light! Can ſuch a thought ſit eaſy on the mind! Do not reaſon and religion turn from the hideous ſight with abhorrence! Is this the repreſentation given us of God in the holy ſcriptures? Do they inſtruct us, that he firſt forſook his rational offspring, and that, as the conſequence of this, they forſook him? Do they not, on the contrary, teach us, *The Lord is with you, while ye be with him? and if ye ſeek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forſake him, he will forſake you?* As a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Yea, earthly parents may forget; yet will not he forget: For his compaſſions fail not. Theſe things confirm our natural apprehenſions of God; and ſhew, that there could not be the leaſt danger of God's withdrawing his influence and aſſiſtance from the creature, had not the creature firſt departed from him.

Mr. Edwards's ſuppoſition, that creatures "never commit ſin, but only when God leaves them to themſelves, "and neceſſarily ſin when he doth ſo," leaves no room for a diſtinction between the caſe of an *innocent creature*, and that of thoſe from whom God withdraws the aſſiſtances of his grace in conſequence of *obſtinate impiety and wickedneſs*, and as the *puniſhment* thereof; whom he is ſaid to give up to their own hearts luſt, to walk in their own counſel---Or that of rebel angels, whom he hath reſerved in chains under darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day. Surely there is a difference, and one of great importance, in theſe caſes. Can we ſuppoſe that the offſpring of God, in their primitive ſtate, were left to themſelves in that awful manner which abandoned ſinners and devils are? But what difference is there, if we admit Mr. Edwards's

Edwards's ſcheme ? Can we think of the preſent ſtate of rebel angels, with the judgment that awaits them, and believe that their fall, their preſent condition, and the torments to which they are deſtined, are the conſequence of God's *firſt* departing from them---withdrawing his influence, ſupport and energy, and leaving them to themſelves ! To ſuppoſe that ſin firſt came into the world through the want of divine influence and aſſiſtance ; and then reflect on the terrible puniſhments of it in this and the eternal world, exhibits ſuch a character of the creator and governor of the world, that univerſal ſcepticiſm is preferable to ſuch a ſcheme. We mean not to "ſet " forth this doctrine in colours" more " ſhocking to the " imagination, and moving to the paſſions," than it deſerves. 'Tis impoſſible. We miſrepreſent it no otherwiſe than in not painting it in it's true horrid colours. This will be allowed, if it can be ſhewn, as we now propoſe,

That to aſcribe the origin of evil to the want of divine influence and aſſiſtance is not materially different from aſcribing it to the *poſitive energy and efficiency* of God. For Mr. Edwards connects with " the want or withholding of " divine influence," the divine *determination*, *ordering* and *diſpoſal* of ſin, with all the circumſtances leading to it, ſo as *infallibly* and *neceſſarily* to bring it to paſs. He aſſerts an *efficacious* permiſſion of ſin---and ſuppoſeth that a train was laid from the beginning of the world to bring to paſs the firſt ſin, and, in conſequence of that, every one that hath ſucceeded, or ſhall ſucceed, to the end of time. His " own immediate conduct is original in the ſeries, either " his acting, or forbearing to act." * On

* Mr. Edwards ſaith indeed, " God don't will ſin as ſin." It is above our comprehenſion, that the Deity ſhould will, order and determine that action in the creature, which cannot be done without ſin, and not at the ſame time will the ſin of it—as ſuppoſe theft, adultery, murder, blaſphemy. Eſpecially as the action is ſuppoſed to be *neceſſary*, and this neceſſity impoſed by the Deity—and the perpetrator of the wicked deed wills it no otherwiſe than as ſuch a will is produced in him by an extrinſic cauſe. But admitting this diſtinction, Mr. Edwards's ſcheme will be ſtill embarraſſed. For on this ſuppoſition, how many effects are there without a *cauſe ?* as many as there are ſins of men and devils. For *they*, it is ſaid, " will ſin as ſin." But God doth not determine, order, diſpoſe, deſign or will this wicked will of theirs. Conſequently, in willing ſin *as ſin* moral agents are ſelf-determined,

On theſe things we obſerve, that divine communications were as neceſſary to preſerve innocent beings in a ſtate of rectitude, as they are to ſupport and perfect the ſpiritual life in the regenerate, who are kept by the power of God. But if the creator not only withdrew his influence and aſſiſtance from upright beings, or forbore to act in their behalf; but alſo in his providence ſo ordered and diſpoſed the circumſtances previous to the apoſtacy, as deciſively and neceſſarily enſured this event, what ſhall we ſay? Will it not follow, that there is unrighteouſneſs with God? For the ſame duty was required after the withdraw of divine aſſiſtance; as before. The conſequence of which is, that the duty required of beings in a ſtate of rectitude exceeded their abilities. For the creature might as well continue to live, after God taketh away his breath, as continue holy after the withdraw of divine influence. We might juſt as reaſonably ſuppoſe him to be culpable for that act of God which puts an end to his life, as for the forfeiture of primitive righteouſneſs through an act of divine forbearance, in withholding the aſſiſtances of grace.

The repreſentation Mr. Edwards's ſcheme gives us of the wiſe and good governor of the univerſe is ſummarily this, By the ſuſpenſion of divine influence, beings made holy become unholy, no longer capable of holy exerciſes---every imagination of their hearts only evil continually---dead in ſin---obnoxious to all the diſmal effects of God's wrath in this world and that to come---and an innumerable

termined, or not determined at all. They are themſelves the cauſe of the *wickedneſs* of their wills, or it hath no cauſe. But how is this reconcileable with that deciſive determining providence reſpecting *every* event, which Mr. Edwards undertakes to defend? Moral events he maintains, conſiſt not in the *formal* act; but in the *internal* diſpoſition and *ſtate of the will*. Therefore, if the Deity wills only the material actions of vicious moral agents, then he does not will moral evil, or ſin. He cannot will ſin at all, unleſs he wills the inward exerciſes of the heart, ſeparate from which ſin hath no exiſtence. Is the *ſinfulneſs* of the volitions of moral agents a thing which God willeth? an event which he determineth? If it be, where is the difference between this, and his willing ſin, or being *himſelf* the ſubject of a ſinful volition? If he that willeth ſin doth not will its ſinfulneſs, how can ſin then exiſt? On the contrary, if the ſinfulneſs of the volitions of moral agents be not an event which God willeth or determineth, then he doth not will or determine any moral events of *this* kind.

ble progeny involved with them in the ſame deplorable circumſtances.---All in conſequence of being forſaken of their creator and father, before any thing had been done by them to expoſe them to ſuch a dereliction. This dereliction was the next and immediate cauſe of the firſt ſin of mankind, and by conſequence of all after ſins.

No reaſon can, indeed, be given why divine influence & aſſiſtance ſhould be *withdrawn* from men and angels antecedent to their fall, which would not equally juſtify the governor of the world had he never *imparted* ſuch influence and aſſiſtance to them. And ſuppoſe the caſe had been ſo, would their departure from righteouſneſs have been their fault, when they never had the neceſſary means of attaining to, or continuing in it? To ſay that their defection "aroſe "from the imperfection which properly belongs to a "creature, as ſuch," wou'd not at all relieve the difficulty. For this wou'd be ſaying that ſin properly aroſe from the creature's *original* frame. And if it aroſe from a defect in this, who but the author of his frame could be in fault? The creature cannot be anſwerable for more than he hath received. This way of accounting for the origin of moral evil is very ſingular as well as impious. 'Tis to account for its exiſtence in a way that denies the *poſſibility* of its taking place in the creation. Now where is the difference between ſaying, that the want of divine influence and aſſiſtance was the ground and reaſon of the apoſtacy; and ſaying, that ſuch influence and aſſiſtance was *from the beginning denied* the creature? Is there a difference that in the leaſt affects any doctrine of religion? On either ſuppoſition the Deity is made the poſitive cauſe and fountain of moral evil---or it hath no proper cauſe---or it doth not exiſt. The firſt of theſe Mr. Edwards's ſcheme embraceth, while it ſeems to deny it: And this is what we conteſt with him. He denies that moral agents are *themſelves* the efficient cauſe of their own vicious volitions; as it is certain this would imply a power of ſelf-determination in them: Now if they are not the efficients of their own ſins, the Deity muſt be; elſe ſin would have no efficient cauſe at all---every ſin would be an effect without a cauſe---to ſay which, we agree with Mr. Edwards, would be abſurd.

Admitting then, that God is the efficient cauſe of ſin, mediately or immediately, what is this but ſaying that he is the *producer* and *author* of it? Is not the efficient cauſe of an effect the producer and author of that effect? And can we ſay that God produceth ſin without attributing to him the ſin produced? If the perpetrator of wickedneſs is only the ſubject of certain effects from the operation of the ſupreme cauſe, how can we aſcribe moral blame to him? This doctrine of the efficiency of God in moral evil deſtroys his own moral character, and renders it impoſſible that the creature ſhould be a moral agent. It is to aſcribe the ſin of man to God in ſuch a ſenſe as we cannot attribute it to the devil, without *bringing a railing accuſation againſt him.* For he can only tempt men to ſin: He is not the efficient or producer of it---has not power over their volitions and actions--cannot command their choice. Theſe are reſerved in their own power, notwithſtanding the ſollicitations of the devil. Every man is then tempted, *when he is drawn away of his own luſts and enticed.* Shall we then, by ſaying that God is the efficient cauſe of ſin, reproach our maker in a manner which a good man would not reproach even the enemy of all righteouſneſs?

When Mr. Edwards ſaith, that "ſin aroſe from the im- "perfection which properly belongs to creature, as ſuch; we ſuppoſe he means the ſame as when he ſaith it aroſe from the want or withholding of divine influence and aſſiſtance. If by *imperfection* no more had been meant than the want of *abſolute* perfection---or had he only meant to ſay, that the creature was not made *incapable of ſining*, we ſhould have had no diſpute with him on this point. But if by imperfection be intended a want of *original powers and advantages* to do the duty the Creator required, we by no means admit this, and deny that *ſuch* "imperfection "properly belonged to the creature;" as it would be to aſcribe arbitrary requirements to the moſt High, all whoſe ways are judgement. Yet Mr. Edwards muſt be ſuppoſed to aſſert the creature's imperfection in this ſenſe, inaſmuch as he connects herewith God's "ſo ordering his "circumſtances" in his innocent ſtate, "and withholding divine influence," that herefrom "ſin infallibly and "*neceſſarily* followed."

If

If the creature originally had *ſufficient* divine influence and aſſiſtance, we may ſay, that to continue *holy* was "what "properly belonged to him as" a creature. This may be ſaid with more evident propriety than the contrary. For this was his *duty*. He had a capacity and advantages for it. It was the end of his formation in the image of God. It would have been his perfection, glory and felicity. The degradation of his nature and turning his glory into ſhame, did not *properly belong to him*. What *properly* belonged to him muſt have been his *perfection*, not his *imperfection*. *Sin* did not properly belong to him. It was contrary to his nature and bias conſidered as endowed with the ſpiritual and moral image of God. Angels and men were made perfect in their *order*, as creatures, however capable of improvement, both intellectual and moral. They were, in this ſenſe, perfect, till iniquity was found in them. God's work (what is properly his) is perfect---that part eſpecially which he *created in his own image*. Sin, therefore, could not proceed from any *defect* in his conſtitution---from *unavoidable* imperfection. The imperfection of the creature, *as ſuch*, i. e. as a creature, is unavoidable, in a *natural* as well as *moral* ſenſe. If therefore "ſin aroſe from the imperfection proper to the creature, "as ſuch," then it was neceſſary by a natural neceſſity---which on all principles of morality and religion (even on Mr. Edwards's) is a full excuſe: That is, ſin could not have been at all on Mr. Edwards's plan. For what fully excuſeth, and takes away all blame, is inconſiſtent with the *being* of ſin.

What ſhall we then ſay to a ſcheme which makes the exiſtence of ſin the inevitable conſequence of the *deficiency* of that nature the creature received immediately from God, and of thoſe circumſtances wherein he was originally placed? Wherein doth it eſſentially differ from the ſuppoſition that men and angels were firſt "*made with a fixed pre-* "*vailing principle of ſin in the heart?*" Man never had ſufficient divine influence and aſſiſtance in order to his being and continuing holy, according to Mr. Edwards's opinion of original imperfection. For tho' he ſeems to ſuppoſe he had, by attributing ſin to the *withdraw* of divine influence;

influence ; yet he immediately denies it by ſaying, that ſin aroſe from the imperfection properly belonging to the creature, as a creature : That is, as a creature he was deficient to the purpoſes of holineſs, both in reſpect of original powers and divine aſſiſtance ; and God, by his *efficacious* providence, ſo ordered his circumſtances, that he was under an original neceſſity of ſining---a neceſſity reſulting immediately from a defect of nature and advantages---that is, from God the author of his nature ; and diſpoſer of his circumſtances. Now what material difference is there between forming an intelligent creature ſo, that from the imperfection properly belonging to him, and the circumſtances he is placed in, the want of divine aſſiſtance, he neceſſarily ſins ; and *creating* of him with an evil diſpoſition ? If there is no material difference, and if on the latter ſuppoſition the Creator muſt be the efficient and fountain of ſin, then this is alſo the conſequence on the former ſuppoſition. To ſuppoſe ſin *really* proceeds from God, is to ſuppoſe he is the *author and cauſe*, whether it be ſuppoſed to proceed from him directly or indirectly---immediately, or mediately and remotely. To ſay that it proceeds from him in either way, is to ſay he is the *efficient* and *fountain* of it---the *actor* and *exerciſer* of wickedneſs. Mr. Edwards allows, that "the cauſe which produceth "wickedneſs may be wicked : A cauſe may be to "blame for being the cauſe of vice." ‡

On the whole, his doctrine, while it acquits the creature from all blame, impeacheth the Creator as the poſitive cauſe and ſource of the revolt of angels and mankind, and ultimately fixeth all the criminality in the univerſe on him. How infinitely reproachful muſt that ſcheme of doctrine be, which involveth ſo horrid and blaſphemous an imputation on the ſupream creator and governor of the univerſe, who *will be juſtified when he ſpeaketh, and clear when he judgeth !* For if men and devils are indeed deſtined to do all their abominations, *how then ſhall God judge the world ?* Doth he exert as real an influence in moral evil, as in natural good and evil---as in the conſervation of natural life ? Why then are not moral agents culpable for continuing to

‡ P. 273.

to exiſt becauſe God's viſitation preſerves them, as for going on in ſin through his energy and influence? Did he, who at firſt commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, *in the ſame manner* produce a contrary effect in the moral world, by the withdraw of his preſence, and ſaying, "Let there be ſin," involving the moral creation in blackneſs of darkneſs! What a defiance muſt ſuch a ſuppoſition be to the firſt dictates of reaſon! What a contradiction to the holy ſcriptures! where we are taught, *God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.* Shall *any man* then preſume to *ſay, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God?* But what leſs doth the doctrine before us amount to than this, that God ſecretly deſigns all moral evil; placeth temptations to it before his creatures in an irreſiſtible manner; and deſerts them in the hour of danger? What impiety is this! Were ſuch things ſpoken againſt God by the openly profane and ungodly, the injury and reproach would be comparatively ſmall. But when they are ſaid under a notion of honoring his name and government, by the profeſſed friends of religion, we muſt beg leave to think, that the utmoſt candor can find no ſufficient excuſe for thoſe who are bold and poſitive herein. *Humility* and *modeſty* in diſquiſitions of this kind will always be applauded by the wiſe and good; but *aſſurance* and *confidence* in aſſerting, that God is the cauſe and producer of moral evil; accompanied with *uncharitableneſs* towards thoſe who cannot believe ſuch doctrine, muſt be very forbiding. *Holy and reverend is his name.* When we ſpeak of his counſels and determinations, the ends and reaſons of his government, it ſhould be with much diffidence---with jealouſy and godly fear, leſt we ſhould reproach and diſhonor him, whoſe glory is above the heavens. Counſel may be darkened by multiplying words, and ignorance and temerity manifeſted rather than knowledge and piety. Behold! God is great, and we know him not. How ſmall a proportion have we heard of him? Canſt thou by ſearching find out God! *This*, however, we clearly know, that God cannot do wickedneſs, and hath no pleaſure therein; but delighteth in exerciſing judgment, righteouſneſs and loving-kindneſs in the earth.

Some

Some, with a view to exalt divine *ſovereignty*, may have detracted from the moral perfections of the Deity, which are his glory. Is it not far more honorary to his glorious name and character to conceive of him as the *parent* of the univerſe? to repreſent him like a prince who is the father of his people, and accounts it his glory to advance their happineſs---rather than a tyrannical, arbitrary prince, who aims only at his own grandeur, and the diſplay of his own power, inſtead of the good of his ſubjects, having no other meaſures of governing than caprice and licentious will? If the former repreſentation excites the greateſt reverence, eſteem and confidence in an intelligent mind, it is moſt worthy to be aſcribed to our maker.

Mr. Edwards agrees with the writer of the letters on the origin of evil in rejecting the uſual ſolution, which derives ſin from the abuſe of free-will. And when the latter puts the queſtion, Can it proceed from a wiſe, "a juſt, and a "benevolent God? Can ſuch a God form creatures with "diſpoſitions to do evil; and then puniſh them for acting "in conformity to thoſe evil diſpoſitions"? the reader will ſtand amazed at the anſwer, which is in the following words: "Strange and aſtoniſhing indeed muſt this appear "to us, who know ſo little of the univerſal plan! *but is* "*far*, I think, *from being irreconcileable with the juſtice of* "*the ſupream diſpoſer of all things*---Omnipotence is oblig-"ed to afflict *innocence*, or be the *cauſe of wickedneſs*; it "hath plainly no other option." * We ſhall take the liberty, having had frequent occaſion to quote this author, to give the reader a conciſe view of his general ſcheme.

Taking his lead from this principle, that all evil, natural and moral, political and religious, ariſeth from the neceſſary imperfection of creatures, he endeavours to ſhew, that all government among men is founded in *violence and corruption*, and all religion in *deluſion* and *abſurdity*---that our *vices* are the ſupport of government, our *follies* the preſervation of religion †---that religion, particularly Chriſtianity, is *deficient in every principle* requiſite to its anſwering its own end ‡---that natural evil was unpreventable by God's power, and moral evil expedient in *conſequente* of natural---

* P. 102, 103. † Ibid. 89; 128; 138. ‡ Ibid. p. 164.

natural---that with regard to God, vice is the conſequence of miſery---that God is, and muſt be, the *author of ſin*, as the contrary would be to ſay, that ſomething exiſts without any cauſe at all--- that he is the author of all natural evil, and *in the ſame manner*, *on the ſame principle*, the author of all moral evil---that he *made* creatures with morally evil diſpoſitions *---This ſcheme, the author affirms, is the only one, on which the doctrines of original ſin, predeſtination and redemption can be vindicated---that Chriſtianity can be defended on no other plan. † On the ſame general principle, the neceſſary imperfection of the creature, this writer endeavours to eſtabliſh the doctrine of *tranſmigration*, and an *eternal ſucceſſion of ſtates*. (P. 55,---75.) What friend he was to *Chriſtianity*, or even to *natural religion*, let the reader judge ! ‡ But this author's principles will have a firm ſupport, if once we admit thoſe of Mr. Edwards on the ſame ſubject. It is a matter of notoriety, that ſome writers in Europe, who have of late years diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the cauſe of irreligion and ſcepticiſm, (both before and ſince Mr. Edwards's book appeared) have built on the ſame foundation of neceſſity. 'Tis to be lamented, when the friends and public teachers of religion adopt and ſet themſelves to defend, a ſcheme of doctrine which gives countenance to infidelity. There are thoſe among ourſelves who have the confidence to inſult the religion of their country and the bible, by publickly delivering the ſame doctrine, for ſubſtance, as the aforeſaid author, with little reſerve. There is reaſon to apprehend people may ſoon be taught from the pulpit, in ſo many words, that almighty God firſt infuſed wickedneſs into the creature. It is unhappy Mr. Edwards's book has given

* Ibid. p. 11 ; 100,—109. † Ibid. p. 112,—120.

‡ This writer has, however, been kind enough to caution us againſt infering, that the "*neceſſity* of vice and puniſhment make any "alteration in their natures with regard to man"—and ſays, it "doth "not in the leaſt extenuate men's guilt. Men may be *made inclined* "*to vice*, in order to render them proper objects of ſuch a degree of "miſery as—was *previouſly determined* for the ſake of public good— "that though ſin in us is evil and puniſhable ; in God it is not ſo." (P. 107, 108 ; 110.) Mr. Edwards's diſtinguiſhing the nature of ſin from it's cauſe—his ſaying that God wills ſin, but not as ſin—that ſin is for the beſt, are equivalent poſitions.

ven ſo much countenance to this profane, blaſphemous tenet. It ſeems better not to believe a God, than to entertain ſuch an opinion concerning him. Whether this be not the reſult of Mr. Edwards's ſcheme, we are content the impartial ſhould determine.

We have now offered the reaſons of our diſſent from Mr. Edwards reſpecting the origin of evil. We are fully perſuaded it did not, *could* not, come into exiſtence in the way he ſuppoſeth---Yet *how* it in fact came to paſs, that beings made upright have fallen, we acknowledge is to us incomprehenſible---and apprehend it is ſo to any human underſtanding; not excepting theirs who have attempted to account for it. There is a ſenſe in which it is doubtleſs true, that ſin "aroſe from the imperfection "of the creature;" that is, the creature was not made incapable of ſining. He was originally endowed with a freedom to holineſs or ſin: He might have choſen the former, though eventually he choſe the latter. His felicity or miſery was made to depend on his own election. There was no want of original powers and divine communications in order to his continuance in a ſtate of moral rectitude. It therefore remains, that moral evil aroſe from a *neglect* or *perverſion* of the powers and divine communications he had in innocence. Angels and men might have continued holy; but miſimproved the gifts of God, and thus forfeited his influence and friendſhip. So far ſeems clear: And this is ſufficient to vindicate the providence of God in permitting ſin and miſery to enter into the world. How it came to paſs, that liberty was originally abuſed, ſeems to be a matter of unprofitable ſpeculation. To thoſe who reject this ſolution of the matter, and object, that ſin could not ariſe from the abuſe of liberty, ſome farther reply may, however, be made in the ninth ſection.

N. B. In our examination of Mr. Edwards, (p. 64.) it was *incidentally* noted from him, that "God deciſively orders all the volitions of moral agents by a poſitive influence"---he adds in the place refered to, "or permiſſion." We truſt it has been fully ſhewn, that he intends an *efficacious* permiſſion---to "decide, determine, direct, is to *act*," as

as he ſaith himſelf. At the ſame time he makes a diſtinction, it ſhould ſeem, between an efficacious permiſſion, a deciſive efficient determination, and *poſitive influence*. This diſtinction we had not ſo particularly attended to. And though we ſee not the leaſt room for it, and have no doubt but what he has ſaid clearly *implies* a poſitive influence of the Deity in ſin; yet on reviſing the aforeſaid quotation we find he meant not to *expreſs* it. We readily take this opportunity to correct the undeſigned miſrepreſentation, and wiſh we could ſay his doctrine doth not contain the thing, which was not meant to be explicitly affirmed. Some of the advocates for his ſcheme maintain a poſitive influence of the Deity in ſinful volitions, and ſay it was his real opinion, that God is the *efficient* cauſe of ſin.

SECTION V.

On the connection between the nature and cauſe of volition.

IT is a favourite diſtinction with Mr. Edwards, that "the eſſence of vertue and vice lies in the *nature* of "volition, not in the *cauſe*." We before took ſome ſlight notice of the futility of this diſtinction. We knew, indeed, that the conſiſtency of Mr. Edwards's ſcheme depended not a little on the propriety of diſtinguiſhing the nature of moral actions from their cauſe: But had we repreſented ſuch a diſtinction as really important, *upon his plan*, poſſibly it might have been eſteem'd invidious. However, we are *now* conſtrained to ſay, ſuch a repreſentation wou'd have been the exact truth. And though we ſtill think the diſtinction futile and evaſive, yet we have a reaſon, which we had not when we wrote before, for giving this matter a particular conſideration. Our having been publickly called upon (not in very obliging terms *) to point out the weakneſs of this diſtinction, will excuſe us with the reader, ſhou'd he think more notice is now taken of it, than it really deſerves.

We ſhall firſt examine the merits of this diſtinction---and then remind the reader of the importance of it *on Mr. Edwards's plan*.

Firſt, Of the *merits* of it. To ſay the *eſſence* of virtue and vice lies in their *nature*, is only ſaying, that the nature of them conſiſts in their nature. Or the propoſition might be tranſpoſed thus: The *nature* of virtue and vice lies in their *eſſence*. The word nature needs explaining as much as the word eſſence. To uſe the former as a definition or explanation of the latter, wou'd not be leſs trifling than to attempt to explain the term *neceſſary*, by the words *muſt*, *can*, *cannot*, of which Mr. Edwards takes notice. (P. 18.) We don't advance one ſtep in our underſtanding of the ſubject by ſuch explanations. Shou'd any one aſk, wherein doth the eſſence of virtue and vice conſiſt? and receive for

* Eſſay on moral agency, part I. ſect. 4.

for anſwer, It conſiſts in it's nature---wou'd he think the anſwer leſs impertinent, or be leſs diſpoſed to laugh at him that offers it, than if upon aſking an explanation of the word neceſſity, he ſhou'd be anſwered, that which is neceſſary, muſt and cannot but be ?

We deſire no logical proof that the nature of virtue and vice lie in the nature of a virtuous or vicious diſpoſition. We allow that ſuch a diſpoſition is *what it is* ; and think there was no occaſion to fill the page with proofs of this ſort. For who is fool enough to diſpute the thing ! But doth this ſhow us what *conſtitutes* the nature of virtue and vice ? what it is that *makes* any particular action or diſpoſition virtuous or vicious ? Or doth it follow, from admitting that " the nature of vertue and vice lies in their " nature," that therefore their nature is *ſeperable* from their *cauſe ?* or that one can be judged of *detach'd* from the other ? Were vertue and vice, as effects in the natural world, produc'd by the efficiency of ſome cauſe extrinſic to the ſubject, and in which he is but a paſſive recipient, then, indeed, we might detach their cauſe from their nature. But this is beging the queſtion. It ſtill remains to be proved, that vertue and vice in rational agents are the production of a cauſe extrinſic to themſelves.

This diſtinction of Mr. Edwards's is, therefore, ſubtil and evaſive, as it carries in it an intimation, that his opponents deny the eſſence of volition to lie in it's nature, and maintain it lies in it's cauſe by way of diſtinction from it's nature. But when or where have they affirm'd the latter, or deny'd the former ? Again, this diſtinction is evaſive, inaſmuch as it takes for granted, that if the eſſence of volition lies in it's nature, then the nature of volition may be ſeperated from the cauſe---which conſequence is by no means admitted. It is evaſive alſo, as it takes for granted that the cauſe of moral volitions is not in the mind of moral agents. For if it be indeed true, that the cauſe of ſuch volition is in the mind or agent willing, we preſume, in this caſe, no one wou'd attempt to disjoin the cauſe and nature of volition. Leaſt of all could Mr. Edwards.

To treat of moral cauſes and effects in the ſame manner as a philoſopher wou'd diſcourſe on natural cauſes, is a

method

method of handling moral ſubjects altogether improper, but much uſed by Mr. Edwards---With what advantage to his own ſcheme? For in *this* way of reaſoning we aſcend from the effect to the cauſe. "The cauſe muſt be "proportionable and agreable to the effect, nor can there "be more in the effect than in the cauſe," * as Mr. Edwards hath obſerved. Admit then that vertue and vice in moral and accountable creatures are the production of a cauſe extrinſic to their own minds, have we not ſhewn, that the cauſe which produceth wickedneſs, is wicked? The ſubject in whom vice is thus produced cannot be vicious at all. Or to ſpeak more properly, the ſuppoſition that a creature can, in this way, be the ſubject of a vicious diſpoſition, is a palpable abſurdity. A diſpoſition thus produced cannot partake of the nature of vice, viewed in relation to the *ſubject*, however it doth as view'd in relation to the *cauſe* and *producer* of it. If then this cauſe be God, (as on Mr. Edwards's ſcheme we have ſhewn it muſt be) who wou'd not ſhudder at the conſequence!

That the nature of moral evil cannot be detached from it's efficient cauſe, we preſume will clearly appear from ſtating a few caſes. And ſince it is the *origin* of evil we are ultimately enquiring after, theſe caſes ſhall be ſtated upon the different ſchemes of accounting for the introduction of moral evil, which have been embraced by divines and philoſophers. The firſt ſhall be Mr. Edwards's own.

Suppoſe then the exiſtence of ſin aroſe from the *imperfection* properly belonging to a creature, *as ſuch*, and from God's withholding or *withdrawing* his grace. On this plan can the firſt ſin of angels and man be disjoined from the cauſe? If the creature had not original abilities and communications from God adequate to the duty requir'd of him; or if theſe abilities and communications were ſuſpended or withdrawn before any forfeiture was incur'd; cou'd the moral evil of that diſpoſition, which the firſt ſin involved, be attributed to the ſubject of it, any more than if he had been created with it? Or any more than if it had been infuſed by the poſitive influence of ſome other agent? Mr. Edwards wou'd admit, that if a moral agent was "firſt

* P. 62.

" firſt made with a fountain of evil in his heart," or had a vicious diſpoſition afterwards produced in him by the efficiency of the Deity, this wou'd be to make God the actor and doer of wickedneſs. Now hath it not been ſhewn, that his own ſcheme runs up to this? Doth it not, therefore, follow, even on his own doctrine, in the caſe we are now ſuppoſing, that the obliquity of ſin cannot be ſeperated from the cauſe---though (ſhocking to mention!) he makes the Deity himſelf that cauſe? Doth this ſcheme give us an idea of the moral governor of the world at all different from what the ſcriptures give us of the arbitrary prince of Egypt in the time of Moſes, who demanded of the Iſraelites the uſual tale of brick, after he deny'd them ſtraw? Or of thoſe who *bound heavy burthens, and grievous to be born, and laid them on mens ſhoulders, but themſelves wou'd not move them with one of their fingers?* Should a maſter require of his ſervant ſuch a taſk as he cou'd well perform, having proper tools to work with---but never allow him ſuch tools, or for no fault of the ſervant's take them from him, ſo that he *neceſſarily* fails of the performance of his taſk: Wou'd any body pronounce ſuch ſervant wicked and ſlothful---accuſe him of idleneſs and want of reſpect to his maſter? Wou'd not every one pity him as having an hard, and unreaſonable maſter, and attribute all the blame to the latter for denying his ſervant what was requiſite to his performing the taſk required? But is there ſuch unrighteouſneſs with God? There are, indeed, but a very few divines of eminence, if any, who account for the exiſtence of ſin in this way which Mr. Edwards doth.

Suppoſe in the next place, that the *poſitive agency and efficiency* of God was the cauſe of ſin's firſt enterance into the world. Can we disjoin the nature of ſin from the cauſe, in this caſe, and in this ſuppoſition? Wou'd not this be to make the creature anſwerable for the act of God? Are moral agents only the ſubjects of certain effects from divine agency? Wherein then do they differ from machines? And if there is no material difference, wherein conſiſts the moral evil of any diſpoſitions in them? But what an horrid impeachment of the moſt High doth this doctrine contain?

contain? This is, indeed, the clear conſequence of Mr. Edwards's ſcheme, though he choſe not to affirm it in words. 'Tis more directly to arraign the perfections and government of almighty God: And hence many, who have thought favourably of Mr. Edwards's doctrine, reject this with pious indignation; and did they ſuppoſe his doctrine was reducible to ſuch a conſequence, wou'd immediately give it up. But as this aſcription of the firſt ſin, of all ſin, to the influence, energy, agency or efficiency of God, differs nothing eſſentially from the next caſe we ſhall ſtate, we will proceed directly to

Suppoſe moral agents *created* with vicious diſpoſitions---Suppoſe a creature formed with the temper of Lucifer---ſuppoſe he himſelf had been created with his preſent temper. Such a temper is, *in it's own nature*, exceeding odious. But cou'd it be ſo eſteem'd ſeperate from the *creating cauſe?* Wou'd it ſatisfy any rational man to be told in this caſe, that the *having* ſuch a diſpoſition argu'd the high criminality of the ſubject of it, without our being obliged "at all to conſider *how he came to have it*---that let "him come by it how he will, he is fully and perfectly "free in exerciſing of it, and therefore deſerving of blame "and puniſhment." Wou'd not this be to make the creature culpable for the conſtitution and temper he receiv'd immediately from the forming hands of the Creator? Might we not as juſtly ſuppoſe it, a culpable thing in any human being that he is not formed with the capacity of Gabriel? or in ideots, that they have not natural underſtanding? or in brutes, that they are not endowed with reaſon? Can the thing formed be anſwerable for the act of the former of it? What is properly God's conſtitution cannot be the ſin of the creature. Conſequently, in the caſe now put, the *having* the malignant diſpoſition ſuppoſed, would not infer criminality in the ſubject, however deteſtable ſuch diſpoſition is in itſelf: But the criminality, if any there be, muſt be aſcribed to the immediate *author and efficient* of it---that is, to the creating *cauſe*. Nor is the ſuppoſition of a creature made at firſt with ſuch a diſpoſition materially different from Mr. Edwards's opinion concerning the introduction of ſin, view'd in it's natural conſequence; as we truſt hath already been proved. Whether,

Whether, therefore, we ſuppoſe that ſin aroſe from the want or withdraw of divine influence and aſſiſtance, or from divine agency and efficiency, or that creatures were made wicked at firſt, the nature of ſin cannot be ſeperated from it's cauſe. Now except theſe opinions concerning the origin of evil, there has been no other that deſerves to be mentioned but that maintain'd by the generality of moraliſts and divines, that it aroſe from the abuſe of free-will--in other words, from a cauſe in moral agents themſelves.

Before we diſmiſs the inſtances above adduced, we wou'd ſubjoin this further obſervation, that if *that* energy be an *holy* energy, which angels and ſaints are the ſubjects of, then that is a *ſinful* energy, which devils and wicked men are the ſubjects of, or *thro' which* their wills are inclined and determined to vice---That if one moral agent (whether creature or creator) is ſuppoſed to be the poſitive cauſe of ſin in another, ſo much ſin as is to be attributed to the efficiency of the former, is to be taken from the criminality of the latter, and ſet to the account of the cauſe and producer of it. *

We go on to obſerve, that as moral agency involves accountableneſs to a moral governor, ſo the laws of God have reſpect to the *inward* and *outward* man. They require not only ſuch inward principles and affections as correſpond to his perfections and gifts to us, and the relations we ſtand in to our fellow-creatures; but alſo external acts of devotion, juſtice, charity, ſelf-government. The matter and ſubſtance of morality and religion are as much the ſubject of command, as the internal principles and affections of heart, which ſhou'd regulate and influence to 'em. Now the nature of an external action is the ſame, whether perform'd by a good or bad man. The prayers and alms of a Phariſee, in themſelves conſidered, or as to the matter of them, are as commendable as thoſe of the moſt approved Chriſtians. Mr. Edwards inſiſts, that moral good or evil lies in the ſtate and diſpoſition of the mind, and allows of no vertue or vice in external actions, detach'd from their cauſe---the principles they proceed from, the ends aim'd at. But why are *internal exerciſes* then disjoined from their cauſe? It is as evident a truth, that *material actions* are good or

* *Quod eſt cauſa cauſæ, eſt etiam cauſa cauſati.*

or bad in their own nature, as that the inward principles and affections are ſo. External acts are what they are in their own nature, not depending on the ſentiments and volitions of the agent. Though in a *relative* view and eſtimation they vary, according to the temper, circumſtances and advantages of the agent; yet their nature is unalterable. Men's doing things in their own nature right, with an evil intent; or doing things in their own nature very evil, meaning to do God ſervice, doth not alter the nature of the things done. Therefore let us connect both internal exerciſes and external actions with their cauſes, or neither.

Again, The ſame ſin may be very differently *aggravated* in different perſons, or in the ſame perſon at different times. But any ſin is in it's own nature the ſame, by whatever moral agent committed, or however circumſtanced. The preciſe definition of ſin is A NOMIA--- i. e. without law, or a non-conformity to law. But to determine the degree of guilt in regard to any particular ſin, beſides the general conſideration of the *nature* of the vicious affection or act, the *advantages*, *opportunities* and *circumſtances* of the tranſgreſſor muſt alſo come into conſideration. Moral writers have ever kept up this diſtinction. Beſides maintaining that ſome crimes are more heinous than others view'd in their own nature, they have alſo maintain'd, that "ſome "are more heinous than others *by reaſon of ſeveral aggra-* "*vations.*" The ſame ſin admits of a variety of circumſtances, which either aggravate or extenuate the guilt of it: Theſe diſtinctions are carefully preſerved in the ſacred writings. Now the particular *aggravation* and *circumſtances* of crimes are as different from their *nature*, as one ſin is different from another---(as different as blaſphemy is from ſome idle word men may ſpeak) and therefore ought to come under a ſeperate conſideration. But Mr. Edwards's doctrine precludes this plain and important diſtinction. For if the ſeperate conſideration of the nature of any vicious volition in itſelf be all that is neceſſary to determine the matter of criminality, then the ſame crime muſt be equally heinous in every perſon that commits it, and in the ſame perſon at all times. Difference of circumſtances can have no weight, as they do not belong to the nature of any particular vice---they only make a *gradual*, not a *ſpecific* difference.

ference. But the former, it ſeems, is of no eſtimation. In other words, there is nothing that can either heighten or extenuate the *ſame* tranſgreſſion. *

The foregoing obſervations may be ſufficient to ſhew, that commendation or blame is not to be ſeperated from the cauſe of a virtuous or vicious diſpoſition, and to expoſe the weakneſs of that diſtinction of Mr. Edwards's, on which we have been remarking. It is at leaſt true with reſpect to the origin of evil, that it's nature cannot be ſeperated from it's cauſe, nor even in idea conceived to be ſo.

Having examined the merits of the diſtinction itſelf, we promiſed, in the next place, to remind the reader, that however futile and evaſive it really is, yet on Mr. Edwards's *plan*, and *in his* view, it was of much *importance*.

The ſenſe he had of it's importance appears from what he has wrote on this point---particularly Part IV. Sect. 1.

* Suppoſe the wills of moral agents are derived from the author of nature, (which by implication was Mr. Edwards's doctrine) and we might apply to the general ſubject of this ſection ſuch inſtances as the following. A good man is, by the act of divine providence, reduced to a ſtate of inſanity—in conſequence of which he is full of the moſt implacable hatred, malice and malignity againſt his neareſt kindred and beſt friends—yea, blaſphemeth his Maker. This diſpoſition is in it's own nature exceeding vile. But is it to be ſo conſidered in him? It is, on Mr. Edwards's principles. His *having* and *indulging* the aforementioned malignity of temper, his *voluntarily* uttering blaſphemy, are enough to prove him a malignant perſon, and a blaſphmer; without conſidering at all *how he came* by ſuch a diſpoſition—whether it proceeded from a cauſe extrinſic or intrinſic. For the madman may proceed as *deliberately*, *voluntarily* and *deſignedly* in theſe things, as one who hath the uſe of reaſon. In the abovenamed inſtances "he doth wrong, and doth ſo from his heart." And what more is wanting to conſtitute him a moſt vile and abandon'd ſinner? nothing—except that his ſentiments and diſpoſition are not under his own command, during the delirium. His will is, indeed fully in theſe things—His internal exerciſes are voluntary—his external actions are ſpontaneous exertions—he acts leiſurely, according to the preſent diſpoſition of his heart—he is under no other neceſſity than what is his will's preſent propenſity. But then he is incapable of directing and governing his own volitions and actions—therefore not the cauſe of them—therefore not blameable.

On the ſame principle, that agents are blameable for any particular diſpoſition interwoven with their original frame, we might argue, that the brute-creatures are vicious. The fierceneſs of the tyger, the ravening diſpoſition of the bear and wolf, the venom of the ſerpent, might be adduced as examples of a diſpoſition moſt odious in it's own nature: There is no oppoſition in their wills to it—they exerciſe it freely—'tis their nature,

Nor did he miſ-judge, provided this fundamental principle in his ſcheme be true, that moral agents do not originate, in any caſe, their own actions---in other words, provided the cauſe of their actions be not in themſelves. For on this principle, one or other of theſe things muſt follow---either that vertue or vice is not predicable of moral agents, or that the eſſence of them depends not on their cauſe. The firſt Mr. Edwards wou'd by no means admit; the other he ſaw was a plain conſequence of his principles. He therefore ſet himſelf to defend it as well as he could, that he might exempt the Deity from the charge of being criminal, while, by ſuppoſition, he originates the volitions of his intelligent creatures.

Hence appears the occaſion Mr. Edwards had to ſeperate the nature of vertue and vice from their cauſe. This is very much a turning point in the controverſy on liberty and neceſſity, as he hath ſtated it. Whether the diſtinction can be vindicated as juſt and proper, we leave the reader to judge. If it cannot, one or other of theſe conſequences muſt follow---either firſt, that there is no ſin in the world---or ſecondly, that God himſelf is the only criminal being---or thirdly, that the cauſe of ſin is in the mind of the ſinner. Either of the three ſubverts Mr. Edwards's ſcheme. The laſt is the only eligible opinion.

Mr. Edwards's ſubject naturally led him to be explicit on this queſtion, Whether God or the creature be the proper cauſe of moral evil? It muſt have been full in his view while writing every part of his book. But we don't recollect that he has once ſaid, or ſo much as hinted, that the creature is the efficient cauſe of ſin; though he hath ſaid many things which imply that God is the efficient. Whether he declined being explicit from a conviction, that though his ſcheme made God the cauſe of moral turpitude, the minds of Chriſtians were not yet prepared to receive this aſtoniſhing doctrine, we ſhall not ſay. It is of vaſt importance, who is the cauſe of ſin. We could wiſh Mr. Edwards had not evaded a direct anſwer to a queſtion, which his ſubject, in every part of it, required him to anſwer in *clear* and *determinate* language.

SECTION

SECTION VI.

Moral evil not beſt for the world.

"I BELIEVE," ſaith Mr. Edwards, "there is no per-
" ſon of good underſtanding, who will venture to
" ſay, he is certain that it is impoſſible it ſhould be beſt---
" that there ſhould be ſuch a thing as moral evil in the
" world." Be it ſo: Is his inference juſt? "It will cer-
" tainly follow, that an infinitely wiſe being, who always
" chuſeth what is beſt, muſt chuſe that there ſhould be
" ſuch a thing." † Many intelligent perſons apprehend there is a medium between being *peremptory* on either ſide. While their modeſty and humility prevent their ſaying, *they are certain* moral evil is not for the beſt, they make as great a ſcruple of ſaying, they *are certain* it is beſt ſin has taken place. It would be no difficult matter to ſhew, that the latter aſſertion is as *daring* as the former, altho' Mr. Edwards has "ventured" to affirm the one, and to impeach the goodneſs of their underſtanding who may affirm the other, or chuſe not to expreſs themſelves with the aſſurance he doth. Whether it argues "good under-
ſtanding," or prejudice and confidence, that he is ſo "ex-
" ceeding peremtory in this opinion (as he is in every opi-
" nion which he maintains in this controverſy with the"*
deniers of neceſſity) we leave to others to judge.

To one that enquires, "Why did God permit ſin?" it would be a proper anſwer, You have no right to know: 'Tis ſufficient that he is not the *cauſe* of it. The reaſons and ends of the permiſſion of ſin, as well as of other events, the Father hath reſerved very much in his own power. 'Tis not for us to know them. Whatever the conſequences of ſin are, or might have been, had no redeemer been provided, God and his throne will be guiltleſs, if the fall of angels and men is laid at the right door. Our duty is to bleſs God who hath not permitted the human apoſtacy without the proviſion of an all-ſufficient ſavior, in whom whoſoever believeth ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life---

† P. 169, 170, 171. * P. 108.

life---who hath made us partakers of his goſpel and grace in Chriſt; and to give a practical aſſent to this faithful ſaying, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners. For thus only can we be ſaved from the wages of ſin, and become the ſubjects of that grace which reigneth through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

The queſtion reſpecting the reaſons of the divine permiſſion of ſin, being uſeleſs and impertinent at leaſt, if not preſumptuous, we would only take occaſion to obſerve, that "it is the inevitable reſult of the nature and condition of created free agents, that they may poſſibly err, and act contrary to right; and the placing them in ſuch a poſſibility is by no means to be imputed to any deficiency of wiſdom and goodneſs in God. For example, ſuch a creature as man, compounded of fleſh and ſpirit, muſt have a variety of affections; ſome higher, and ſome lower; ſome which determine him to purſue the proper perfection of his ſuperior faculties as the chief end of his being, and others which attach him to the inferior part of his conſtitution; which muſt alſo be preſerved by his care, during the time appointed for his ſubſiſtence. Since then, there are ſuch different tendencies in the nature of man, and liberty alſo eſſential to him, he muſt be capable of acting differently according to the different direction of his inſtincts and affections; and his acting always right could not be abſolutely ſecured, or the poſſibility of moral evil avoided, without ſuch an interpoſition of almighty power, as would import an eſſential change in his frame and his ſtate. In other words, if the divine perfections required that ſin ſhould be abſolutely prevented, or not at all permitted, they required that ſuch a creature as man in a ſtate of probation, ſhould not be created: Which ſcarcely any conſiderate perſon will have the hardineſs to affirm." ‡

Mr. Edwards, it will be remembered, proceeds upon this ſuppoſition, that the infinite creator, before the world was, having in contemplation all poſſible ſyſtems, gave the preference to one including moral evil, as beſt calculated to manifeſt his perfections. Hence he affirms it to be part

‡ Abernethy.

part of God's own infinite ſcheme of things to *chuſe* what he *hates*, and what is in itſelf, as man's act, diſagreable to his heart. (p. 380.) He accordingly inſtructs us to view the world, with all the wickedneſs that ever was, is, or will be in it, as the projection, ordination and production of that glorious being, who hath not pleaſure in wickedneſs, with whom evil ſhall not dwell. Nothing has ever taken place but in proſecution of his original plan: Moral evil is a neceſſary means through which he effects his deſigns: and (it is intimated p. 163,) hath not "mar'd his ſyſtem,"---nor indeed can this be ſuppoſed, if ſin is ſo eſſential and material "a part of his infinite ſcheme of things."

Now were it admitted, that moral evil is for the beſt, as Mr. Edwards declares *he is certain it is*; this would by no means be a bottom broad enough to ſupport his doctrine; that it came into exiſtence through the divine determination and deciſive diſpoſal. For if he "diſpoſeth the mind to" moral evil, then he "*cauſeth* the mind to be diſpoſed to, and to will" it; "and that is the ſame thing as to be the *cauſe* of" moral evil (p. 136.) Again, Mr. Edwards inſiſts, that the *determiner* of volition is the *cauſe* of it. So that to ſay (as he does through his whole book) that God determineth every volition of moral agents from their firſt exiſtence; is to ſay, he is the cauſe of every ſinful volition. But enough has been offered on this head. The opinion, that moral evil is for the beſt, is much more tenable on the principles of thoſe who aſcribe cauſality and ſelf-determination to the creature, and ſuppoſe ſin aroſe from the abuſe of free-will, maintaining no influence or diſpoſal of the divine being in it, but only his *permiſſion* of it, or *ſuffering* it to come to paſs---than on the principles of thoſe who aſcribe moral evil to his *efficiency*. The former opinion ſhews a reſpect to the moral character of God: The advocates for it ſay, he taketh occaſion to bring good out of evil---to over-rule the exiſtence of ſin for the beſt. The eſpouſers of the latter opinion ſeem boldly to ſay, that God doth evil, that good may come. Can a being of perfect moral excellence give exiſtence to ſin by his influence? Can it be faulty in the ſubject, and yet proceed from him

him as the cauſe ? We preſume it has been made evident, that neither of theſe things can be true.

The ſcheme under examination ſuppoſeth God to be the cauſe of every thing, and conſequently of ſin---hence ſin is infered to be beſt, becauſe it is ſuppoſed to proceed from God in this manner. Were moral agents left to determine themſelves, then it is pleaded, the events depending on their determination would be contingent, and might not come to paſs ; which is ſuppoſed to be irreconcileable with the preſcience and decrees of God---the plan of his government. Moral evil being part of his plan, to render it's exiſtence *certain*, he determined, it is ſaid, to *effect* it by his providence---by his own *power and agency* ; as much as he determined to create the world by an exertion of his power. The difficulty from divine preſcience ſhall be examined in it's place. But if the above mentioned foundation be falſe, the inference, that ſin is for the beſt cannot be ſupported by it, even granting the thing infered to be true in itſelf.

On his principles Mr. Edwards (with good reaſon) ſuppoſed it would be objected, that God may do evil that good may come. But how hath his anſwer removed the objection, if it be indeed true, as he teacheth, that moral evil is a part of God's infinite ſcheme---an effect of his determining and diſpoſing---and therefore beſt ? If ſo, is it unfit and unſuitable in it's nature, or of bad tendency ? Can that be a *neceſſary means* of the greateſt good in the divine ſyſtem, which is upon the whole either unfit and unſuitable in it's nature, or bad in it's tendency ? In order to accompliſh his own holy and benevolent ends, is infinite wiſdom compelled to make uſe of unholy and malevolent means ? means unfit and unſuitable in their nature, and in their tendency bad ? How can ſuch things ſtand in the relation of means to the propoſed end ? Mr. Edwards muſt either ſay, that God doth evil that good may come, or elſe that moral evil is a thing fit in it's nature, and good in it's tendency. For to be the cauſe of an evil effect is evidently to do evil ; and though ſuch evil be improved as a means of great general good, the end will not ſanctify or alter the means. No being can, with a good intent,

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be the deſigned cauſe of moral evil. Yet it is inſiſted on, that moral evil is determined and deſigned by God---"a part of his own infinite ſcheme." And if it is his determining act, then he is the cauſe of it. Plain common ſenſe, unperverted by metaphyſics, teacheth the world, that holy means only are *adapted* to an holy end; and that no ſuppoſeable reference of moral evil to a good end can juſtify any moral agent in having recourſe to it to effect his deſigns---much leſs can a being of infinite perfection, who can be at no loſs for proper means to accompliſh his own ends, firſt be the cauſe of wickedneſs, that by this, as a neceſſary means, he may bring to paſs the purpoſes of his holineſs and goodneſs. The nature of the means will be the ſame, whatever be the end in view. After all the ſophiſtical pains that have been taken to ſhew, that moral evil, though infinitely hateful in it's nature and tendency, is yet a neceſſary well-adapted means of the greateſt good, and as ſuch firſt effected by the deity, and then improved by him to advance the greateſt happineſs in his ſyſtem, it yet remains problematical, or far from being proved that unſpotted purity can be the author of ſin. If we ſhould grant it to be beſt that moral evil hath come into exiſtence, will it therefore follow, that it is an effect proceeding from divine efficiency? or that it is beſt the ſupreme cauſe ſhou'd be the *author* of it? "They who think and talk in this ſtrain *ought to remember*," that they have no reaſon to complain, if the world eſteem it "an inſtance of the greateſt arrogance" and audacious impiety.

"Though the actual permiſſion of evil," ſays biſhop Butler, "may be beneficial to the world: (that is, it would "have been more miſchievous, not that a wicked perſon "had *himſelf* abſtained from his own wickedneſs, *but that any* "*one had forcibly prevented it*, than that it was permitted:) "Yet notwithſtanding, it might have been much better "for the world, if this very evil had never been done. "Nay, it is moſt clearly conceivable, that the very com- "miſſion of wickedneſs may be beneficial to the world, "and yet, that it would be infinitely more beneficial for "men to refrain from it. For thus, in the wiſe and good "conſtitution of the natural world, there are diſorders

"which

" which bring their own cures ; diſeaſes, which are them-
" ſelves remedies. Many a man would have died, had it
" not been for the gout or a fever ; yet it would be tho't
" madneſs to aſſert, that ſickneſs is a better or a more per-
" fect ſtate than health ; though the like, with regard to
" the moral world, has been aſſerted."

With moſt Chriſtians it might be laid down for a *poſtulatum*, that the knowledge, imitation and enjoyment of God were his end in the formation of moral and accountable creatures. Whence it will follow, that the greateſt good of the intelligent creation is to fall in with that inſtruction in the oracles of truth ; (contrary to many in modern metaphyſics) *Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exerciſe loving-kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth : For in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord.* This clearly points out the Creator's view and deſign in giving being to moral agents---what *his* own ſcheme is---what ſhould be *their* firſt and laſt end, and regarded by them as the one thing needful---ſhewing them how they may fall in with the deſigns and exertions of infinite wiſdom for the advancement of their holineſs and higheſt happineſs, and thereby attain the end of their creation. To live without remembrance or knowledge of God, in contradiction to the above mentioned moral perfections, which he diſplays in his own government of the world, and propounds to the imitation of the ſubjects of his moral government---to ſin againſt him without fear---we need not ſcruple to ſay, this would be to oppoſe his deſigns. If his end in the creation of moral agents was, that they might be conformed to him and bleſſed in his likeneſs and friendſhip ; *perhaps* it may be infered, that he had no ſecret deſign contrary to this. *Perhaps* it may follow, that he did not make rebel angels at firſt with this view, that he might be the cauſe of their rebellion, and then puniſh them eternally for what was the effect of his own determining act, as a means of diſplaying his holineſs and juſtice and mercy, of eſtabliſhing his dominion and authority, of promoting and ſecuring the moral rectitude of their fellows. " They who talk or think in this ſtrain,"

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ſeem not to underſtand what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm. Such things publiſhed by unknown authors would be generally ſuppoſed to proceed from diſbelief of religion, natural and revealed.

From what has been obſerved, it follows, that moral evil was not God's end in the creation of moral agents; and conſequently, that it was not part of his ſcheme to bring them to the enjoyment of himſelf, or ſecure to them this felicity, by means of moral evil. They who ſay ſo ought to prove theſe two things. Firſt, That moral evil is a neceſſary means of qualifying moral agents for the enjoyment of God, or of their everlaſting ſecurity of his friendſhip. Secondly, That he hath preſcribed it as the true medium to this end, and determined it's exiſtence with this view. In other words, that ſin is the appointed medium of holineſs and happineſs---neceſſary to the moral perfection of the intelligent creation. We are too ſenſible what ſort of employment he muſt have who undertakes this, to ſpend time in expoſing the abſurdity of ſuch a ſcheme.

That holineſs is the greateſt good of the moral world, we beg leave to take for granted. We don't deſire to maintain a controverſy with thoſe who deny it. This principle being admitted, the enquiry is, what hath the directeſt tendency to promote holineſs? For that is for the beſt, which hath this tendency. Now we may appeal to common ſenſe, whether moral evil is moſt eligible in this view. Whether that which ſtands in direct oppoſition to holineſs hath the moſt direct tendency to it, or conduceth to the higheſt degrees of it. Do contraries promote and advance each other? Is greater happineſs attained by a partial remedy of an evil, than would be by preventing it? Which is moſt honorable to the infinite Creator, to ſay, that the original powers and aſſiſtances imparted to the creature were ſufficient to his continuing upright, and that his fall aroſe from the abuſe of them? Or to ſay, that his fall aroſe from a defect of original advantages, or the withdraw of divine influence?

Natural evil appears plainly to be the conſequence of moral, and not moral the conſequence of natural, as a late

writer ſuppoſeth. * Evils of the former kind are the judicial as well as natural conſequence of the latter ſort, and deſigned to correct and amend them---the evil of puniſhment or affliction is deſigned and adapted to cure the evil of ſin---or to lead ſinners to repentance ; and promote a reformation in them.---So that moral evil ſuppoſeth their deviation from the greateſt good, from what would have been beſt for them. And if their reſtoration to righteouſneſs is beſt, let any one ſhew that their departure from righteouſneſs was for the beſt---that their original permanency in it would not have been the greateſt good---that the permanency of the *whole* intellectual ſyſtem, as well as a *part* of it, in holineſs, would not have been beſt.

Mr. Edwards ſuppoſeth, that all events which *have taken place* may *therefore* be inferred to be agreable to infinite wiſdom and goodneſs and part of the ſcheme of the ſuperintendent of the univerſe---and that all events which *ever will take place* fall within his plan and deſign, for the ſame reaſon. Whence it follows, that whatſoever *hath not*, or *will not come to paſs*, is diſagreable to him, contrary to his ſcheme of government. For were it agreable to his wiſdom and goodneſs, he would chuſe it ; and if he choſe, he would determine it ; and if he determined it, he would bring it to paſs. Conſequently, he chuſeth and deſireth not the repentance of ſuch as die impenitent. For this would be to chuſe ſomething in contravention of his infinite ſcheme. Conſequently, he hath not commanded them to repent ; or if he hath, then he hath commanded what is not agreable to his wiſdom and goodneſs. Or if his deſire is expreſſed in his commands, then the thing deſired not taking place ; he muſt be infinitely croſſed and grieved, in proportion to his infinite love and deſire of righteouſneſs, and hatred of wickedneſs. For this is Mr. Edwards's own inference, if any thing is ſuppoſed to come to paſs which God chuſeth and deſireth not---or fails of coming to paſs which he chuſeth ſhould come to paſs. Doth he therefore not chuſe (notwithſtanding the frequent declarations and aſſevertaions in his word) that impenitents (finally remaining ſuch) ſhould turn and live ? Are the rich-

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* Letters on the origin of evil.

es of his goodneſs and forbearance, in the day of viſitation, not deſigned to lead them to repentance? Is it not queſtionable, upon the whole, whether he is a lover of holineſs? For how much would the renovation of impenitents add to the ſum total of holineſs in the univerſe? But this is not a thing choſen and deſired, *becauſe it doth not come to paſs*---and for this *good* reaſon it would not be beſt. Or will any undertake to ſhew, that the impenitency of great multitudes is a means of proportionably more holineſs in other beings---that the holineſs of a ſmall number comparatively is ſo amazingly increaſed *by this means*, that the amount of holineſs and happineſs in the ſyſtem will be greater, than if all abandoned ſinners had been led to repentance? greater than if all created free-agents had continu'd holy? Or admit this, the conſequence then is, that the impenitent wickedneſs and eternal puniſhment of the greateſt part of the intelligent creation is a neceſſary means, thro' which the governor of the world effects the ends of holineſs and goodneſs with reſpect to a remnant that ſhall be ſaved. But it yet remains to be ſhewn, that ſuch means are adapted to the ends of the greateſt holineſs and happineſs, upon the whole.

" If moral evil, and the puniſhment of it are neceſſary " towards promoting univerſal good, then the more wick- " ed men are, the more they promote that good; and the " more they co-operate with their Creator in compleating " his great and benevolent plan of univerſal happineſs." It is argued, that ſince " miſery brings with it it's utility, " why may not wickedneſs?"

" If ſtorms and earthquakes break not heav'ns deſign,
" Why then a Borgia or a Cataline?"

" That though ſin in us, who ſee no farther than the " evils it produceth, is evil, and juſtly puniſhable; yet in " God, who ſees the cauſes and connections of all " things, " and the neceſſity of it's admiſſion," it is not ſo, but very good. " Thus, robbery may diſperſe uſeleſs hoards to the " benefit of the public; adultery may bring heirs and good " humor too into many families where " they would other- " wiſe have been wanting; and murder free the world from " tyrants and oppreſſors. Luxury maintains its thouſands,

" and

" and vanity its ten thouſands. Superſtition and arbitrary
" power contribute to the grandeur of many nations, and
" the liberties of others are preſerved by the perpetual
" contentions of avarice, knavery, ſelfiſhneſs and ambition.
" Thus the worſt of vices, and the worſt of men, are of-
" ten compelled by providence to ſerve the moſt benefici-
" al purpoſes---and thus private vices become public be-
" nefits."* Therefore theſe vices are for the beſt---and by conſequence the vicious perſons ſome of the moſt beneficial members of ſociety. The univerſe would by no means be ſo happy without them as with them. Why then do the miniſters of religion warn the wicked, and call upon them to turn from ſin to God? why beſeech them to be reconciled to God? Why do they not rather wink at their crimes, and even encourage them therein? For though by their hardneſs and impenitency they treaſure up to themſelves wrath, yet their incorrigibleneſs in ſin, and their eternal puniſhment for thoſe vices to which they were determined by providence, being neceſſary to advance the holineſs and happineſs of the univerſal ſyſtem, they may be excited and exhorted to perſiſt in ſin by the motive of public benevolence; and may have this conſolation under the apprehenſion of that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, which await them, that their deſtruction ſoul and body in hell, is for the good of the univerſe!

Suppoſe the miniſters of the goſpel were to preach to their people, that the converſion of the *many* who live abandon'd and die impenitent is not what God chuſeth or deſireth, not agreable to his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs---that it is a deſireable thing they ſhould live and die in ſin---that God hath pleaſure herein---and that, to render the event infallibly certain and neceſſary, he "actually effects, by a poſitive agency and diſpoſal of his own," or by his "determining providence," the "hardneſs of their hearts"---and this as a neceſſary means of manifeſting his perfections, and advancing the greateſt good, in the eternal ſalvation of a *ſmall* number, whoſe ſecurity in holineſs and happineſs depends on their reflecting upon the torments of the damned.---Would not people juſtly ſay, "We are

* Letters on the origin of evil, p. 86, 87; 109, 110.

are *delivered* to do all theſe abominations!" When they hear the words of the curſe, will they not bleſs themſelves in their hearts, ſaying, "We will walk in the imagination of our heart: We ſhall act in ſubſerviency to God's infinite ſcheme, and promote the holineſs and happineſs of the ſyſtem, by doing every one what is right in his own eyes. We will rejoice and be exceeding glad in the addition we make to the public good by our vices, and will make ourſelves more vile." Indeed, he is an enemy to the world, who doth not take ſatisfaction in moral evil, and praiſe God for it's exiſtence, if the doctrine we are examining be true. For hath it contributed ſo much to the perfection and happineſs of the moral world? could not the divine character have been manifeſted to the creatures to good advantage without it? is it's exiſtence the effect of divine determination? and doth it become us to lament or repent of *that* which was a neceſſary means of the greateſt poſſible good? Shall we grudge the happineſs of the moral world? Shall we bewail ourſelves, or call upon others to bewail, that which is the grand ſecurity of the virtue and happineſs of moral agents? the *only* means of illuſtrating the divine perfections to angels and men, and of eſtabliſhing his dominion and authority over them? And if moral evil be an effect of divine operation, why are we not as much obliged to celebrate his praiſe for the production of this, as for his other works which declare his glory---eſpecially ſince MORAL EVIL MORE ILLUSTRIOUSLY DISPLAYS HIS NAME THAN ALL HIS OTHER WORKS?

Upon what evidence, by what reaſoning, do men fix down in this concluſion, that the moral rectitude of holy angels would have been peculiarly endangered had there been no apoſtates, the terror of whoſe puniſhment is ſuppoſed to ſecure the inhabitants of the world above in their allegiance? How does it appear that holy angels would have reverenced their maker and father leſs, or been leſs apprehenſive of his authority, had moral evil never taken place? Whither will this doctrine lead, that the divine perfections could have been exhibited to the intelligent creation only through the intervention of ſin? Apply it

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to the character of a wiſe, juſt and benevolent earthly ſovereign. Can the ends of his government be attained, and his true character made to appear, only by means of the rebellion of his ſubjects! Is it neceſſary to ſecure him that reſpect and reverence to which he is intituled, that a great part of his people ſhould revolt, and be capitally puniſhed! Thanks to the lawleſs, rebels, and traitors! For it is doubtleſs beſt the character of ſuch a ſovereign, and the nature of his adminiſtration, ſhould be known, and that the ends of his government ſhould be effected. In a word, will not the doctrine before us terminate in this, that it is beſt there ſhould be no law or government human or divine? For better no law or government than ſuch as it is beſt ſhould be violated and contemned. Yet it ſeems that from ſuch violation and contempt of authority, the true excellence and dignity of government is to be learnt, and it's ends anſwered; and from hence *only*. How ſagacious are the reaſonings of ſome men, who meaſure the Deity by themſelves!

'Tis well that the underſtandings of the generality of mankind are not perverted by metaphyſical ſubtilties. Common people have no manner of doubt but ſin is an evil thing and a bitter---the ſource of all miſery. They have no doubt but it had been well for the world had this accurſed thing never entred into it. They never once imagine that God hath pleaſure in it; that he is the cauſe of it, or determines moral agents to it---they ſuppoſe that moral evil is a thing to which creatures are determined of themſelves, agreable to the plain ſenſe of the apoſtle's words, "Let no man ſay, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed." Common people have penetration enough to keep up a diſtinction between God's being the cauſe of natural good and evil, and his being the cauſe of moral evil---They readily admit a poſitive influence of the Deity in holineſs, but not in wickedneſs. If ſome modern metaphyſicians had the ſenſe and diſcernment of the vulgar in theſe matters, it would be happy for themſelves and the world. The

common

common people have been educated in the belief of ſuch things as theſe; that the moſt exalted motives to holineſs are a conſideration of it's intrinſic beauty and excellence, it's tendency to dignify the intelligent nature, to advance the divine glory and ſecure his approbation. They have believed that the fear of eternal puniſhment is but an inferior principle of action---a ſpirit that ruleth in ſlaves, not in ſons. Are theſe mere vulgar errors? So it ſhould ſeem, if it be true that the puniſhment of devils is what ſecureth the perſevering holineſs of angels and glorified ſpirits, and eſtabliſheth the divine authority in their hearts.

Mr. Edwards hath no where ſaid, that moral evil might not have been prevented, but rather intimated the contrary. Nor hath he denied but the human apoſtacy might have been permitted without the proviſion of a ſavior. However, on his principles neither of theſe things may be ſuppoſed. For he hath ventured to ſay, he is CERTAIN that moral evil is for the beſt---and that an infinitely wiſe being muſt therefore chuſe it. Whether it follows or not from the hints that have been given, that moral evil is not beſt for the world, we are by no means very ſollicitous, becauſe we chuſe not to be peremptory and confident. Yet we apprehend enough has been ſaid to create ſuch a degree of ſuſpicion whether it is indeed beſt, that *few* "perſons of good underſtanding will ſay, they are certain it is beſt." Or thus much at leaſt we ſuppoſe will follow from the things that have been obſerved, that the advantage of moral evil to the world is not proveable in the way Mr. Edwards has attempted to prove it---the reſult of which is, that God may do evil, that good may come. Two propoſitions appear to be mutually aſſumed by him to prove each other: One while he makes a poſtulatum of this, that whatever is, is *therefore* beſt; and proceeds to argue, that God determines moral agents to ſin. At another time, making a poſtulatum of this laſt poſition, he proceeds to argue, that ſin muſt therefore be infinitely beneficial to the world. What part ſoever of his diſcourſe be examined, the plain conſequence appears to be this, that God is the cauſe of all wickedneſs.

SECTION VII.

On Foreknowledge.

Others apart ſat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reaſon'd high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge abſolute,
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes loſt.
Paradiſe Loſt. LIB. II.

NO queſtion on the ſubject of morals hath more perplexed the learned than this, How is divine preſcience reconcileable with liberty in the creature? While moſt (and among theſe the wiſeſt of men) have modeſtly confeſſed their ignorance, and looked upon the queſtion as unanſwerable by an human underſtanding; ſome few have attempted to ſolve the difficulty. But the attempt hath been executed in ſuch a manner as hath rather evidenced the folly and arrogance of the undertakers, than cleared the ſubject. The reader will hence conclude, that the ſolution of this difficulty is not what we propoſe in the preſent ſection.

But ſince ſome gentlemen ſeem to ſuppoſe, that preſcience and liberty cannot both be firmly believed unleſs the mind of man can reconcile them---ſince Mr. Edwards ſeems to think his own ſcheme altogether clear of this difficulty; and ſince from the divine preſcience he infers his doctrine of neceſſity; theſe things ſhall be briefly examined in this place.

To ſay that preſcience and liberty are abſolutely irreconcileable, becauſe we ourſelves cannot reconcile them, would be to take the dimenſions of the divine mind from our own. An infinite underſtanding may be able to reconcile them, when a finite cannot. If any ſubject involves difficulties, which we cannot ſolve, we may not immediately infer a contradiction in it. For what ſubject can be mentioned that doth not involve ſuch difficulties? If we determine to believe no doctrines, till we ſee *how* theſe things can be, this will land us in abſolute ſcepticiſm.

Do we believe nothing but what we can give a rationale of ? 'Tis manifeſt then, that we do not believe the divine exiſtence, nor that of any other beings or things---not even our own exiſtence. For who pretends to know after what manner God exiſts ? or to be acquainted with the eſſences of other things ? The divine eternity, infinity, omniſcience, &c. tranſcend all our conceptions. We are wholly ignorant how our own ſouls and bodies are united--are loſt in the contemplation of our own frame. The trinity and ſatisfaction are inexplicable myſteries. The ſcheme of Chriſtianity, and the whole moral government of God, are incomprehenſible. Nor would they be otherwiſe, and be worthy of him who is perfect in knowledge. His judgments are unſearchable, and his ways paſt finding out. As the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are his thoughts and ways above ours. Although we have ſuch evidence in general of the truth and reality of the things above-mentioned as in a manner compels our belief ; yet when the queſtion is put, How can theſe things be ? we diſcern inſuperable difficulties---at the ſame time we are conſcious infidelity would involve us in difficulties ſtill greater.

With reſpect to the queſtion before us, if the voice of ſcripture or reaſon be hearkned to, we muſt admit both preſcience and liberty---and that they are conſiſtent, tho' after a manner inconceivable by us. For we cannot believe evident contradictions.

We uſe the term foreknowledge in accommodation to our own narrow views and way of conceiving things. In an infinite underſtanding, there is no before or after---no ſucceſſion of ideas. To him who calleth things that are not as though they were, and with whom a thouſand years are as one day, the knowledge of futurity is preſent knowledge. How then can a finite mind conceive the manner of his knowing futurity ? Is there any thing in viſible creation that affords a reſemblance of what we call preſcience. When we undertake to ſpeak on a ſubject ſo high and too wonderful for us, it becomes us to be diffident of ourſelves, and very ſparing of words, remembering that we are of yeſterday---Thoſe ſeem not aware of

their own ignorance, and the danger of ſpeaking of God the thing that is not right, who attempt to explain this matter; as though by ſearching they could find out God —as though he had taken counſel with them. Haſt thou heard the ſecret of God? And doſt thou reſtrain wiſdom to thyſelf?

Some men are apt to depart from evident truth out of regard to abſtruſe ſpeculations. They turn aſide from the plain road of common ſenſe, diſdaining a beaten track, and are carried away with the error of the wicked, under pretence of new and important diſcoveries. If any truth be plain, this is, that man is free. Next to the conſciouſneſs of our own exiſtence is that of our moral freedom. Yet a truth ſo obvious is called in queſtion by ſome men, becauſe they cannot make it agree with the idea they have formed of God's infinite knowledge and eternal counſels.

"As to the manner of God's foreknowing certainly "contingent future events, that is, which have no neceſ- "ſary cauſe, nor are to be accompliſhed by his own power, "and the determination of his will, but produc'd by other "free agents; this ſeems to be incomprehenſible by the "human underſtanding. That any mind ſhould foreſee "with certainty a diſtant event, which does not neceſſarily "proceed from the nature of things, nor is fix'd by the "purpoſe of a voluntary agent, is wonderful to us and far "ſurpaſſeth our conception. For as our knowledge of "futurity can only reſt on one or other of theſe founda- "tions, we can form no diſtinct notion of any foreknow- "ledge without them. It is probably their apprehending "the divine preſcience after the ſame manner, and limit- "ing it to the ſame grounds, which has occaſioned ſo "much perplexity in the minds of men, and involved "their ſpeculations upon this ſubject in ſo much confuſi- "on. Some imagining that contingent events could not "otherwiſe be ſo aſcertained, as to be infallibly known, "have ſuppoſed peremptory eternal decrees concerning all "of them, even the freeſt actions of men; and not only ſo, "but a previous divine influence on the active powers of "rational creatures, exciting them to action: But others "judging this to be utterly inconſiſtent with human liber-

"ty,

" ty, and, with reſpect to evil actions, inconſiſtent with
" the purity and goodneſs of the divine nature, yet ſtill
" adhering to the ſame limited foundation of foreknow-
" ledge, have denied the doctrine of preſcience altogether,
" or doubted concerning it. I believe the beſt way for
" us to get rid of theſe difficulties is wholly to neglect
" the hypotheſes, which have been invented to account
" for the manner of the divine preſcience, acknowledging
" that it is to us inexplicable, and yet concluding that
" this is no ſufficient objection againſt a doctrine, other-
" wiſe well confirmed." *

" I admire," ſays Dr. Eliot, " the modeſty, as well as
" goodneſs of heart, diſcovered by the great Mr. Locke,
" in one of his letters to Mr. Molineux; " I freely own,"
" ſays he, " the weakneſs of my underſtanding, that though
" it be unqueſtionable, that there is omnipotence and om-
" niſcience in God our maker, and I cannot have a clearer
" perception of any thing than that I am free; yet I can-
" not make freedom in man conſiſtent with omnipotence
" and omniſcience in God, though I am as fully perſuad-
" ed of both as of any truths I moſt firmly aſſent to, and
" therefore I have long ſince left off the conſideration of
" the queſtion." The Doctor ſubjoins to theſe words of Mr. Locke the following pertinent and ſeaſonable reflection: " If ſome of our modern reaſoners, who have not a
" tenth part of his underſtanding, had a little more of his
" humility, the world would be free from thoſe angry
" diſputes about fate and free-will, liberty and neceſſity,
" which puzzle the heads, but ſeldom mend the hearts,
" of thoſe who engage in them." †

To proceed: Preſcience is a difficulty that encumbers Mr. Edwards's own ſcheme no leſs than that of his oppo-nents. For he ſaith, " There muſt be a certainty in things
" themſelves before they are certainly foreknown," and affirms that the former " is the foundation" of the latter. (P. 22; 175.) Events have " a fixed certain futurity
" prior to" foreknowledge, and this antecedent neceſſity of their coming to paſs is the cauſe of their being certainly foreknown. What is meant by the certainty in things themſelves.

* Abernethy's diſcourſe on divine omniſcience.
† Dr Eliot's ſermon on natural religion, p. 21, 22.

themſelves prior to their exiſtence, is as unintelligible as his opinion, "that there is in the nature of things a foun-"dation for the knowledge of the being of God, without "any evidence of it from his works;" of which notice was taken, Examination, p. 36. marg. If by this certainty be meant any thing different from the divine decrees and determinations, then his argument will ſtand thus: The certainty there is in things themſelves is the foundation of the divine decrees; the divine decrees are the foundation of foreknowledge; and foreknowledge is the foundation of that neceſſity which belongs to all events in the natural and moral world. This *ſeems* to be arguing in a circle. On the other hand, if by this certainty in things themſelves be meant the ſame as the divine decrees and determinations, then theſe being the ſuppoſed foundation of foreknowledge, the latter cannot be the cauſe of events, as Mr. Edwards repreſents, but the former. Neceſſity is the cauſe of the knowledge of events, and not the knowledge of them the cauſe of their neceſſity.

Further, If the purpoſes and decrees of God, or his determinations as to futurity, be antecedent to foreknowledge, and the foundation thereof, then his will is determined "at random, by blind contingence," without deſign or foreſight---"guided by no wiſdom, no motive, no intel-"ligent dictate whatever---he only acts by an *Hobbiſtical* "fatality." (P. 330, 334.) To ſpeak of the divine will as determined prior to knowledge, is plainly to ſuppoſe it determined without counſel and wiſdom, undirected by knowledge and intelligence. And what holineſs can there be in ſuch determinations? It was ſurely through want of "reflection and reſearch"---through inattention to his own ſcheme, that Mr. Edwards grounds the certainty of foreknowledge on an antecedent neceſſity of events ariſing from the divine counſels and purpoſes. He repreſents the opinion of thoſe who teach that God's foreknowledge is antecedent to his decrees, as a ſervile ſubjecting the Deity to fatal neceſſity; and ſaith, it argues inferiority and ſervitude unworthy of him, and comports with the heathen notion of fate as above the gods; becauſe this is to ſuppoſe, ſaith he, that events have a fixed certain futurity, to

which

which the divine volitions and designs are subject, and must be accommodated. (p. 352, 353.) 'Tis not a little surprizing, that Mr. Edwards did not perceive this objection was much more applicable to his own doctrine, than to that of his opposers. Besides, How do these things agree with his own words, p. 325. "We must conceive of "the perfection of the divine understanding as the *foun-* "*dation* of his wise purposes and decrees." As he is not herein reconcileable with himself, so his principles are not consistent with the admission of forkenowledge. To say, the certainty of things, or divine determination of events, is *antecedent* to his perfect knowledge of futurity, is to deny *prescience*, and only to ascribe *after-knowledge* to God. So that while Mr. Edwards supposeth his own scheme of necessity clear of all difficulty from the head of fore-knowledge, it appears not only to militate with itself, but utterly to preclude that prescience from which he infers the necessity of all events.

We will now enquire, in the last place, whether prescience implies necessity. Mr. Edwards useth the terms certainty and necessity, as tho' they were perfectly synonymous; and saith, "Philosophical necessity is nothing dif- "ferent from certainty." (P. 22.) It is granted by all who believe fore-knowledge, that *this* really implies the certainty of all future events---not only that they will come to pass, but also that they will come to pass in such a certain manner. But the inference is not, that they will come to pass *necessarily* because fore-known---that they are indissolubly connected as effects with prescience as their cause. Now it is in this sense that Mr. Edwards maintains necessity. If fore-knowledge infers necessity (in his sense of the word necessity) then it implies an irresistible determination of the wills and actions of moral agents.

Prescience has no causality in the coming to pass of these things which are the objects of it. So far is it from having any *efficiency* to produce them, that it hath no influence to their production by way of *motive* or excitement. For a motive is something extant in the mind's view. Now can any moral agent know, previous to any given volition or action, that he shall certainly be determined to such volition

lition or action? If not, then he cannot know that such volition or action is certainly foreknown. For this would be to say, that what may never become effect may be foreknown. And if moral agents cannot tell beforehand what is foreknown with respect to themselves, then foreknowledge can have no influence in determining their actions. For what is not *perceived* cannot excite or move to action; or determine the wills of moral agents; nor consequently be considered as the cause, ground, or reason of their being determined to this or that. "Nothing," says Mr. Edwards, "can induce or invite the mind to will or act any thing, "any further than it is perceived, or is some way or other "in the mind's view." (p. 8.) To say that prescience is in the view of the creature's mind, wou'd be to ascribe an incommunicable attribute of the Creator to a creature. Foreknowledge, then, has no influence in bringing any moral volitions to pass---nor is it even an *occasion* of their becoming effect. It doth not stand in the relation of a cause, motive, reason or occasion to the existence of things to come, any more than our knowledge of things past or present has such relation to their existence. Herein we have Mr. Edwards's concurrence, p. 175. "I freely allow "that foreknowledge don't prove a thing to be necessary, "any more than after-knowledge." Now doth our knowing that a thing is already come to pass imply that it came to pass necessarily? If not, then neither doth foreknowledge of a future event imply that such event must come to pass by necessity. That we know certainly an event hath already taken place, doth not imply that the nature of that event, or the manner of it's coming to pass, are determined by our knowledge. No more doth divine prescience affect the *nature* of events, or the *manner* of their coming into existence.

Mr. Edwards, as hath been observed, makes the divine determination, and decisive ordering and disposing of all events, the ground of their being foreknown---he supposeth the divine determinations alike concern'd in moral volitions and actions, as in those things which are the mere work of God---that it properly belongs to him to dispose, fix and determine the wills of all moral agents,

in

in every act, from the beginning of their existence. And though he asserts not in words a positive agency of God in evil actions; yet the thing in effect is asserted, as hath been shewn.* Upon his scheme God is the author and cause of sin; no less than of natural good and evil---the author and cause of men's vices, no less than the giver and upholder of life, and fountain of their natural endowments and external advantages and enjoyments---the author of evil dispositions, no less than of holy and virtuous ones. But do not reason and scripture shew us, that there is an important difference between his being the author of the former and his being so of the latter---? that his operation, his determining and disposing providence, cannot extend to moral evil? || Doth foreknowledge infer *such* necessity? We need not scruple to say that the certainty of events, which foreknowledge implies is as diverse from Mr. Edwards's philosophic necessity as truth is from falshood, or light from darkness. To support his inference from foreknowledge, it was incumbent on him to shew, that this is an extrinsic efficient cause, whose influence and operation brings into effect the things foreknown. To say, that foreknowledge is an *antecedent*, and the things foreknown *consequents*, is but trifling, unless it can be shewn that the latter are indissolubly connected with the former as the *cause* of their existence. Mr. Edwards may claim

* Section IV.

|| *Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights.* But *God cannot be tempted with* [*moral*] *evil, neither tempteth he any man.* James 1. 13; 17. compared. All natural good and evil proceed from God as the proper cause. *I, even I am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive: I wound, and I heal. Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.* (Deut. 32. 39.) If it be ask'd, how can natural evil, any more than moral, proceed from a good cause? the usual answer is sufficient, that the former is the penal consequence of the latter. The difference between God's being the author of natural evil and of moral—between his being the fountain of holiness and of sin, is so obvious and important, and so clearly marked in scripture, that 'tis difficult to see how any man can excuse himself in confounding these things. "The effects of necessary causes are, properly speaking, God's own works. And rational creatures have an absolute dependance on him; all their powers are derived from him, and supported wholly by his providence." Yet it by no means follows, that the determination of their wills to vice is to be imputed to him as the cause that they are not themselves the determiners of their own evil volitions and actions.

claim the honour of being the only author that attributes cauſation to foreknowledge.

" Foreknowledge," ſaith an excellent writer, " has no " influence at all upon the nature of things, to make " the leaſt alteration in them. The events which are " neceſſary are foreknown as neceſſary, and thoſe which " are contingent and voluntary, are foreknown no other- " wiſe than as contingent and voluntary.---The futurity " of contingent events is real, though we cannot tell the " cauſe of it, or upon what grounds it is to be known. A " free action now done, was yeſterday, or in any preceed- " ing point of duration, as truly future, as it has to day " actually come to paſs; therefore it is not impoſſible (for " our minds can diſcern no contradiction in it) that an " infinite underſtanding ſhould foreknow ſuch events, " though that knowledge is *too high for us*, or perhaps " any finite mind, *we cannot attain to it.* And here we " may ſafely reſt, as we find ourſelves obliged to do in " our enquiries concerning the other perfections of God, " which are evidently proved to belong to his nature, and " therefore believed, though to us incomprehenſible.--- " We cannot indeed believe contradictions, and to impoſe " them upon us is to affront the rational nature; but it " is no abſurdity to believe the exiſtence and properties " of a being, whom *we cannot by ſearching find out, nor un-* " *derſtand to perfection.*" ‡

To ſupport his peculiar notion of divine foreknowledge and decrees, Mr. Edwards denies moral agents all liberty except what is merely *external*, and the reſult of *neceſſity in the mind.* What pity is it that men, otherwiſe diſcerning, are tenacious of favorite hypotheſes, tho' moſt abſurd and prejudicial in their conſequences! If intelligent creatures are not free in a ſenſe different from the inferior animals, they cannot be ſaid to be moral agents---the accountable authors of the things done by them: What they do muſt, in a moral eſtimate, be conſidered as the action of ſome other being. There muſt be ſelf-determination, or free-dom, ſomewhere, in ſome one being at leaſt. And is it not very bold to aſſert, that God is the producer of all the wickedneſs

‡ Abernethy's diſcourſe on divine omniſcience.

wickedneſs in the world, by his agency? He that maintains this principle, that all our volitions and actions are neceſſary, would ſoon be convinced of his folly were he to reduce the principle to practice. For mankind will think he is free---that his actions are his own---and will treat him accordingly. He muſt ſoon become intolerable to ſociety; and from the reception he meets with, he may clearly infer, that his fellow-creatures univerſally look upon him as a moral agent, and ſuppoſe he might have acted otherwiſe. And he muſt be a ſtrange creature indeed, if, finding the opinion of neceſſity in the moral actions of men (when reduced to practice) diſavowed, with one voice, by mankind, it doth not create in him ſome ſuſpicion wherether it be true, ſpeculatively conſidered.

" It is a concluſive argument againſt ſuch a fatal ne-
" ceſſity as ſome men plead for, that it is contrary to the
" perceptions of the human mind,---we have a conſciouſ-
" neſs of liberty, we perceive no external influence, we
" have a moral ſenſe, we paſs a judgment on our own
" actions, approve or diſapprove ourſelves and others.
" It ſhows the difficulty, to which a very ſenſible writer *
" of the preſent day is reduced, who allows this inward
" perception, that we are neceſſitated to think ourſelves
" and others free; and yet denies the reality of liberty.
" God has, according to him, implanted a deluſive ſenſe
" in us, our feeling is deceitful, the God of truth
" doth continually by a poſitive influence deceive and
" delude us. What ſtrange notions have ſome men of
" that glorious being, all whoſe ways are truth, and who
" is righteous altogether! Is it not better to ſet limits to
" our enquiries, and to ſuppoſe there may be a miſtake
" in ſome curious ſpeculations, than to entertain ſenti-
" ments ſo diſhonorable to God, and ſo entirely ſubverſive
" of all moral government?" †

* Eſſays on the principles of morality and natural religion.
† Vid. Dr. Eliot's excellent diſcourſe on natural religion.

SECTION VIII.

On texts of ſcripture miſconſtrued.

IF from what has been ſaid it ſhould appear, that Mr. Edwards's ſcheme of neceſſity may juſtly be charged with making an holy and good God the proper cauſe of ſin, (which is the leading objection we have all along had to his book on the will) it can be to every little purpoſe to alledge texts of ſcripture in ſupport of it. A doctrine ſo repugnant to our natural apprehenſions of God and his providence cannot be ſupported by any pretence of authority from him. The holy ſcriptures were not given to contradict and ſubvert thoſe notions of his moral perfections and government, which God hath given us by reaſon and the light of nature; but to confirm and improve them, as well as to afford us important inſtruction in things which unaſſiſted reaſon would never have diſcovered. If any, therefore, ſhould bring this doctrine to us, that God is the cauſe of moral evil, the direction given to the Iſraelites, in the caſe of being enticed to idolatry, * is for our learning, and may ſerve to regulate our conduct. We know not what right the advocate for ſuch a doctrine can have to any other anſwer. His appealing to the word of God to ſupport what he advanceth is not very conſiſtent. For if a doctrine of ſuch a nature be true, what faith can be had in any ſuppoſed revelation from God?

Yet it may be of uſe to ſome readers to take notice of the ſcriptures which are adduced to confirm the aforeſaid ſcheme. As it would be tedious minutely to examine every particular text, we ſhall ſelect two or three only, on which the principal ſtreſs is laid. Should theſe be found not to favour the ſcheme they are brought to ſupport, the argument will conclude *a fortiori* with reſpect to other texts, which are ſuppoſed to have leſs weight. The paſſages in the ſacred writings made uſe of by Mr. Edwards may be reduced to three general heads. Firſt, Such as repreſent the taking place of moral evil to be by the determinate

* Deut. xiii. 1,—4.

minate counſel, preſcience and ordination of God. Secondly, ſuch as ſpeak of his hardening moral agents in ſin. Thirdly, Such as are ſuppoſed to favor the opinion of the advantage of moral evil to the univerſe.

Firſt, Of ſuch texts as repreſent the taking place of moral evil to be by the determinate counſel, preſcience and ordination of God.

Under this head, ſuch texts are chiefly inſiſted on as refer to the crucifiction of the LORD OF GLORY.* Now theſe texts either imply an *efficient* determination of the Deity in this event, or they do not: If they do not, they are nothing to the purpoſe for which they are produced by the advocates for neceſſity. On the other hand, if it can be ſhewn that they really imply a divine efficiency on the minds of the murderers of our Lord, influencing and neceſſitating them to this horrid deed; then we ſhall not heſitate to admit, that every ſpecies and degree of wickedneſs proceeds from the ſame efficiency. For if God may be ſuppoſed to effect by his agency a crime of ſuch enormity, what ſhould hinder our believing that all moral evil is the product of his action and influence? But let us compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, and form our judgment from ſuch a compariſon in the preſent caſe. Hence it may appear much clearer, that an efficient determination is *not* intended, than it will from theſe texts taken by themſelves that ſuch a determination *is* intended.

There is a twofold ſenſe in which thoſe moral events, which imply blame in the agents, may yet be ſaid to come to paſs by the determinate counſel, fore-knowledge and ordination of God, without implying any active concurrence or efficiency of divine power herein.

Firſt, Whatever comes to paſs agreable to the predictions of his word, may be ſaid to take place by his determinate counſel and foreknowledge: Such events may be called what his hand and counſel determined before ſhould be done.

Secondly, Such events as he determines not to prevent by the interpoſal of his power, may alſo be ſaid to come to paſs in the ſame way. As all poſſible futurity was fore-

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* Particularly Luke xxii. 21, 22. Acts ii. 23. iii. 17, 18. iv. 27, 28.

ver known to God, it hence follows, that in this ſenſe the exiſtence of all moral evil is by his determinate counſel and foreknowledge : Nor is there any other difficulty in applying this ſcripture language to all moral evil that hath taken place, or ever will, than in the application of it to the particular caſe to which it immediately refers in ſcripture,---viz. the ſufferings of the holy one and the juſt.

What one evangeliſt hath delivered thus, The ſon of man goeth *as it was determined*---† another expreſſeth in theſe terms, The ſon of man goeth, *as it is written of him.* ‡ To the ſame purpoſe ſaith St. Peter, Thoſe things *which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his holy prophets*, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled. * So Acts xiii. 27. They that dwell at Jeruſalem, and their rulers, becauſe they knew him not, *nor yet the voices of the prophets*, which are read every ſabbath-day, they have fulfilled them, in condemning him. See alſo ch. xvii. 2, 3. Luke xxiv. 25, 26. Thus it was the determinate counſel of God, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer ; and in order to this "it was neceſſary God ſhould" permit him "to fall into the hands of wicked men, (for they could have no power over him, unleſs it were thus given them from above) and that he ſhould lay no reſtraints upon them, from executing their malicious deſigns upon him ; and this unreſtrained permiſſion is all that is, or can be ſignified by God's delivering up Chirſt into their hands---His power could not *actually concur*, or *effectively* incline them, to the crucifiction of the holy Jeſus." For although "the hand of God is joined with his council, and applied" to this event ; yet "the hand of God relates not ſo much to his power, as to his wiſdom and providential diſpenſations." ‖

The conſtruction Mr. Edwards's ſcheme fixeth on the ſcriptures under conſideration precludes all diſtinction between the *active* and *permiſſive* providence of God---a diſtinction which hath hitherto been eſteemed important by the Chriſtian church. A writer who ſpared no pains in collecting the ſentiments of criticks and commentators, antient and modern, upon the ſcriptures, and hath diſcovered equal judgment and learning in this uſeful undertaking, has

† Luke xxii. 22. ‡ Matt. xxvi. 24. * Acts iii. 18. ‖ Whitby.

has given us the ſenſe of Chriſtians on this point with ſo much perſpicuity and preciſion, that we ſhall take liberty to make the following extracts. *Conſtitutum eſt æterno Dei conſilio, et in S. S. declaratum*, &c.

In Engliſh thus : It was appointed in God's eternal counſel, and declared in the holy ſcriptures. Though God foreſaw, and decreed to permit, Judas's betraying Chriſt, yet it is not ſaid that God determined Judas ſhould *betray*, but that Chriſt *ſhould go*. There is indeed a divine decree reſpecting the ſins of men ; but then God only *permits*, and over-rules for good, their ſins, and by no means wills or determines their commiſſion of them---*(Lucas Brugenſis.)* If we enquire concerning the actions of Judas, Pilate and Herod, it is certain, indeed, that they did not happen without the father, inaſmuch as a ſparrow doth not fall to the ground without him. But the will of God reſpecting them was *permiſſive*, not *efficient* ; which diſtinction is more agreable to ſcripture, and the judgment of all the primitive Chriſtians, than their opinion who would diſcriminate *actions* from the *vicieuſneſs* that is in them. This, in regard to many actions, contradicts the nature of things ; for inſtance, theft, adultery, and the like, the very naming of which is unintelligible, if the idea of ſinfulneſs be ſeperated therefrom. Thoſe alſo are equally unworthy of regard, who ſay, that the Deity impels men to ſuch actions for *a good end*. For the end alone cannot make ſuch actions right, or juſtify thoſe decrees which antecedently impoſe an abſolute *neceſſity* of committing them.---It may be added, that the name of ſin is abſurd, according to the hypotheſis ſome proceed upon. For we cannot commit ſin in thoſe actions, which infinite goodneſs, by a decree ſubverſive of the liberty of our *will*, determineth we ſhould do. 'Tis more juſt by far to ſay with St. Paul, (Acts 14. 16.) God *permitted* the nations to walk in their own ways ; and if there are any obſcure paſſages elſewhere in ſcripture to expound them in this ſenſe ; *which all the antients did.* (Clemens Origen, Alexandrinus, Origen, Cyprian, Chryſoſtom, Salvianus.) Agreably all the antients conſtantly affirm, that divine preſcience impoſeth on men *no neceſſity* of action ;

which

which were unmeaning, if foreknowledge itſelf be ſuppoſed dependent on *efficient* decrees.

Origen, in his diſputation, Whether what is foretold muſt be done? accurately diſtinguiſheth neceſſity from permiſſion, thus: If the meaning be, *neceſſarily* done, we declare for the negative; for it might not have been done, nor was there any neceſſity that Judas ſhould be a traitor. On the other hand, if no more is meant than not *hindering* the event, which yet might not have become effect, we are for the affirmative. *

P. 362. of Mr. Edwards's book, Dr. Doddridge is introduced in a manner which may lead the reader to ſuppoſe his opinion was the ſame with Mr. Edwards's. Only the firſt part of the Dr's note on Luke xxii. 22. is quoted. In the latter part of the note on that text, the Dr. has taken particular care to guard that part Mr. Edwards has quoted againſt ſuch a conſtruction as this partial view may induce the public to fix upon the Doctor's words. If the reader turns to the place in Dr. Doddridge, it may give him a different view of the Doctor's ſentiments from what Mr. Edwards's quotation exhibits.

In his note on Acts iv. 28. the Dr. ſaith, "It is---rational---to explain this *determination* in ſuch a manner, as to make it conſiſtent with the *free agency* of the perſons concerned. When God's hand and counſel are ſaid to have determined theſe things, it may ſignify God's having *pointed out* this great event ſo wiſely concerted in his eternal counſels, and *marked beforehand* as it were *all the boundaries* of it---in the *prophetic writings*."

What the Doctor's opinion was reſpecting the neceſſity of moral actions, as proveable from the preſcience and decrees of God, we further learn from the following paſſages. Jude v. 4. "*Who were regiſtered to this condemnation.* The word [*Progegrammenoi*] may well ſignify *deſcribed* and *put upon record*; that is, whoſe character and condemnation may be conſidered as deſcribed in the puniſhment of other notorious ſinners, who were a kind of repreſentatives of them. Which interpretation I prefer to any other, as it tends to clear God of that heavy imputation which it muſt bring on

* Poli Synopſis in Luc. xxii, 22.

on his *moral attributes*, to ſuppoſe that he *appoints* men to *ſin* againſt him, and then *condemns* them for doing, what they could not but do, and what they were, independent on their own freedom of choice, fated to. A doctrine ſo pregnant with *gloomy*, and, as I ſhould fear, *fatal* conſequences, that I think it a part of the duty I owe to the *word of God*, to reſcue it from the imputation of containing ſuch a tenet."

Rom. ix. 13. "Theſe words in their connection with the preceeding and following, do indeed prove, that God acts with a ſovereign and unaccountable freedom in the diſpenſation of his favors.---Nevertheleſs it is certain, the apoſtle does not here ſpeak of the *eternal ſtate of Jacob and Eſau*, (whatever ſome may ſuppoſe deducible from what he ſays,) nor does he indeed ſo much ſpeak of their *perſons*, as of their *poſterity*; ſince 'tis plainly to that *poſterity* that both the *prophecies*, which he quotes in ſupport of his argument, refer. Gen. xxv. 23. Mal. i. 2, 3. *His laying waſte the heritage of the Edomites for the dragons of the wilderneſs*, is ſo different a thing from his appointing the *perſon* of *Eſau* to *eternal miſery* by a mere act of ſovereignty, without regard to any thing done or to be done by him to deſerve it; that I will rather ſubmit to any cenſure from my fellow-ſervants, than deal ſo freely with my maker, as to conclude the one from the other."

Rom. ix. 22, 23. "Every attentive reader will, I doubt not, infer for himſelf the great difference of phraſe, in which they who are *veſſels of wrath*, and they who are *veſſels of mercy*, are ſpoken of: It being ſaid ſimply of the former, that they were *fitted for deſtruction*; but of the latter, that GOD *prepared them for glory*. A diſtinction of ſo great importance, that I heartily wiſh we may ever keep it in view, to guard us againſt errors, on the right-hand, or on the left."

Secondly, Of ſuch texts as ſpeak of God's hardening moral agents in ſin. A ſingle inſtance under this head may ſerve inſtead of many. The caſe of Pharaoh is much inſiſted on, of whom it is repeatedly ſaid, that God hardened his heart.

As Mr. Edward's ſcheme inſeperably connects the active and permiſſive providence of God, ſo unleſs it can be

ſhewn

ſhewn that God *actually effects* the hardneſs of ſinners' hearts by a poſitive agency and influence, the ſcriptures produced under this head by no means help his cauſe. Now that God did not, could not, thus harden Pharaoh is manifeſt from the cleareſt notices we have of the divine moral perfections. The oracles of inſpiration and reaſon inſtruct us, that God hath no pleaſure in wickedneſs, that evil ſhall not dwell with him; that he is of purer eyes than to behold it---that there is no unrighteouſneſs with him. Therefore, let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. Is God the cauſe of *that* in which he hath no pleaſure?--to which he hath an infinite averſion? Doth he produce and effect by his poſitive influence *that* which the eyes of his purity cannot behold? Will he puniſh with eternal torments *that* which is the production of his own agency on the creature, and is there yet no unrighteouſneſs with him? can the Judge of all the earth do right notwithſtanding? Doth he determine men to, and by his own operation effect in them, what he cannot be tempted with, nor entice his creatures to perpetrate? Indeed, to effect by his power and influence ſuch diſpoſitions and actions in the creature as involve all moral turpitude, is more than merely to *tempt* moral agents. They may be tempted, and reſiſt the tempter. But to ſay ſuch diſpoſitions and actions are produced in them by the agency of the Deity himſelf, is to charge him, not merely with being acceſſary to, but the author of, what we call ſin in the creatures. It muſt forever be impoſſible to ſeperate the moral turpitude of ſuch diſpoſitions and actions from the producer or efficient of them. The ſcheme of neceſſity excludes, indeed, the poſſibility of ſin. For ſin is oppoſition to the will of God. But ſuppoſe creatures determined thereto by divine efficiency, this "would either be a mere paſſive obedience to the will of God, or an active compliance with it; but neither way a contradiction to it."

If then God could not harden Pharaoh by a poſitive influence and efficiency, it remains that he hardened him no otherwiſe than by ſuffering or permitting him to harden himſelf

himſelf not interpoſing by an irreſiſtible influence to prevent his obduration---or withdrawing divine influence and aſſiſtance from him after enduring him with much long-ſuffering, and uſing various means to humble and reform him. The riches of divine goodneſs and forbearance, intended and calculated to lead him to repentance, hardened Pharaoh, as evidently appears from the ſcripture account of this matter. Agreably we read, Pſalm lxxxi. 11, 12. But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Iſrael would none of me. SO I gave them up unto their own hearts' luſt; and they walked in their own counſel.

Worthy of remark is the note in Mr. Pool, on Exod. ix. 12. *In quinque precedentibus plagis*, &c. In the five firſt plagues, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is aſcribed to himſelf; in the five laſt, to God. As many times as he hardened his own heart, God hardened it for puniſhment. (Lightfoot's Spicilegium.)

The ſuppoſition of the divine agency in the obduration of ſinners, is, upon the whole, incapable of ſupport from the ſacred writings. So groſs a contradiction to reaſon, ſo glaring a repugnancy to the general doctrine of the bible, ſo blaſphemous a reflection on the divine author of the ſcripture, is implied herein, that it is not a little aſtoniſhing any perſons who have a veneration for either ſhould embrace a ſcheme of doctrine which contains it, and attempt to defend ſuch ſcheme by the word of God. It leaves no room for a difference between phyſical and moral neceſſity. It ſuppoſeth that God may deceive us. For it is allowed that we act with the conviction of being free agents, and that the ſcriptures conſider and treat us as ſuch; when in truth we are neceſſary agents, all our volitions and actions being determined by divine agency. "One writer affirms, that though man is a neceſſary a-"gent, having all his actions determined by fixed and "immutable laws; yet this is concealed from him---Who "conceals it? Does the author of nature conceal it, and "this writer diſcover it? What deference is not due to "the judgment of a metaphyſician, whoſe ſagacity is ſo "irreſiſtibly (I had almoſt ſaid omnipotently) penetrat-"ing! But, good ſir, as you are powerful, you ſhould have "been merciful. It was not kind to rob poor mortals of

" this crumb of comfort which had been provided for
" them in their ignorance; nor generous to publiſh ſo
" openly the ſecrets of heaven, and ſo baffle the deſigns
" of providence by a few ſtrokes of your pen. If the laws
" of nature, after maintaining their authority for ſix
" thouſand years, are ſo little able to ſtand before him,
" who knows what havoc he might have made among
" them in the infancy of their eſtabliſhment."*

Laſtly, Of ſuch paſſages of ſcripture as are ſuppoſed to favor the opinion of the advantage of moral evil to the univerſe. Whether moral evil is really for the beſt---eſpecially whether it be ſo in that way which the ſcheme of neceſſity ſuppoſeth, has been already examined. (Section VI.) And what was offered on this head has in a good meaſure ſuperſeded the occaſion for a particular reply to the texts produced here. Joſeph's being ſold by his brethren, and the crucifiction of Chriſt, are particularly alledged as proofs from ſcripture of the beſtneſs of moral evil.

It is granted, that the wiſdom of divine providence is many times conſpicuous in bringing good out of evil---particularly in the inſtances mentioned, over-ruling for great and important good, what was in its own nature, and in the intention of the authors thereof, exceeding vile. The means wicked men and devils employ to bring to paſs their devices, under the ſuperintendency of the wiſe and gracious governor of the world, are made to anſwer beneficial purpoſes, which they thought not of, and contrary to their deſigns. He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs, and carrieth headlong the counſel of the froward. But what is this to the purpoſe of proving, that their wickedneſs is for the beſt? How doth it hence appear to be beſt, that God ſhould *effect* this wickedneſs by his own agency. Unleſs this conſequence is ſhewn to follow, it will be remembred, that the inſtances refered to prove nothing to *their* purpoſe who maintain the neceſſity of moral evil. It may be beſt God ſhould not interpoſe to overrule and neceſſitate the wills of moral agents; and yet it might have been beſt that they themſelves had refrain'd from ſin. It may be beſt that God did not prevent the exiſtence

* BEATTIE on truth, p. 334, 335.

exiſtence of ſin by an irreſiſtible influence; while yet it might have been beſt had fallen angels and men never abuſed their liberty, but perſevered in virtue.

That moral agents ſhould be neceſſitated to be vicious, as a means of the greateſt holineſs and happineſs, is a ſtrange poſition.

To recite ſcripture teſtimonies in oppoſition to this hypotheſis would be needleſs, the whole tenor of the bible being in direct contradiction to it. When the ſcriptures deſcribe ſin as the accurſed thing, which ſeperates the creature from the Creator---the root of all bitterneſs---the ruin of individuals and communities---the wages whereof is death temporal and eternal---Shall any undertake to ſhew, notwithſtanding, that it is for the good of the world---a means of advancing the divine glory, and therefore the production of his power---and attempt to ſupport ſuch a doctrine by the oracles of truth? In order to this, they muſt prove from theſe oracles, that God prefereth ſin to holineſs---that the apoſtacy of men and angels will be matter of eternal praiſe in heaven---that we ſhould ſin greedily, that grace may abound---that ſin is not oppoſite to the will of God, nor to his moral rectitude---that the leaſt ſin is yet infinitely oppoſite to God, and therefore an infinite evil---that infinite evil infinitely promotes God's glory, and therefore is an infinite good---that his wiſdom and holineſs require he ſhould be concern'd in it by an efficient decree and active providence---that the divine influence and agency are alike concern'd in the vices as in the virtues of his creatures.---When theſe and ſimilar difficulties are cleared up, it will be ſoon enough to anſwer arguments, formed from texts of ſcripture to prove, that moral evil is for the good of the univerſe, through divine efficiency.

In the next ſucceeding ſection, ſome things will be offered, which may be applied in this place. We only add here, that while the friends of revelation exhibit ſuch an idea of it, its enemies triumph. The author of the letters on the origin of evil, proceeding on the ſame foundation, takes occaſion to burleſque the doctrine of the goſpel in the following manner: "This principle of the ne-
"ceſſity of moral evil, and its puniſhment, is the foundati-

"on

" on on which the whole fabric of the Chriſtian diſpenſa-
" tion is erected; the principle itſelf is avowed by the
" author of that diſpenſation in clear and expreſs words:
" *It muſt needs be that offences come; but woe unto that man*
" *by whom the offence cometh:* That is, it is neceſſary to-
" wards compleating the deſigns of providence, that ſome
" men ſhould commit crimes; but as no individual is
" compelled by neceſſity to commit them, woe unto all
" who are thus [i. e. neceſſarily] guilty.---The expediency
" of moral evil, ariſing from the neceſſity of natural,---is
" a maſter-key, which will, I am certain, at once unlock
" all the myſterious and perplexing doctrines of that a-
" mazing inſtitution, [Chriſtianity] and explain fairly,
" without the leaſt aſſiſtance from *theological artifice*, all
" thoſe abſtruſe ſpeculations of original ſin, grace and
" predeſtination, and vicarious puniſhments, which the
" moſt learned, for want of this clue, have never yet been
" able to make conſiſtent with reaſon and common ſenſe---
" all evils owe their exiſtence ſolely to the neceſſity of
" their own natures, by which I mean they could not poſ-
" ſibly have been prevented without the loſs of ſome ſu-
" perior good, or the permiſſion of ſome greater evil than
" themſelves." * This author's view, in attempting to evince the neceſſity of moral evil, appears to have been no other than the utter ſubverſion of natural and revealed religion.

* P. 17; 112, 113; 119, 120.

SECTION

SECTION IX.

Objections conſidered.

IF the book which hath been under examination really concludes in this principle, that God is the efficient cauſe of ſin; but few of our readers will think it needful to ſpend much time in conſidering objections. Whether this appears to be the true concluſion of Mr. Edwards's principles, from each of the foregoing ſections taken ſeperately, or from the evidence exhibited in them all taken together, muſt now be left to the judgment of the reader. Some of his friends acknowledge the concluſion we have drawn, adopt it as a principle, and undertake to defend it.

Can God then be the cauſe of *that* which is acknowledged to be contrary to his nature, law and government? Muſt it not be a fruitleſs employment of any man's time to attempt to make the negative more manifeſt than it already is to ſuch as "have plain ſenſe and can follow it?" If the above-mention'd concluſion is clearly faſtned on Mr. Edwards, it is ſuch a *reductio ad abſurdum* as muſt be a full confutation of his doctrine before believers, either Chriſtians or Theiſts. Such as adopt the concluſion, and undertake to vindicate it before the world, ſhould openly declare on the ſide of atheiſm, and ſcepticiſm, before they can reaſonably expect any reply.

"But if it is taken for granted, that Mr. Edwards's "ſcheme concludes in nothing ſhort of the divine effici-"ency in moral evil, why then is this ſection devoted to "the conſideration of objections?" Our anſwer (or rather *apology*) is, to cut off occaſion from them that ſeek it. Though all who believe in God may well take for granted, that there can be no real weight in any reaſoning adduced to prove, that moral evil is an effect proceeding from him as its cauſe; or in any objections to the contrary principle---that whatever ſubtilty and deception there may be in ſuch reaſoning and objections, there can be no validity therein---And though we are by no means fully ſatisfied, that any objections, which can with propriety be made

made on the footing of the divine agency in moral evil, merit attention; yet we ſhall take notice of *two* objections principally, paſſing others which cannot ſo properly be made on the preſent hypotheſis; or if they could, are leſs conſiderable. We ſhall, for inſtance, excuſe ourſelves from particularly conſidering this objection: That to ſay moral agents might in any inſtance chuſe or act otherwiſe than they do, is to ſuppoſe an effect without a cauſe---an objection which has no weight, if moral agents in any caſe determine themſelves, or are the cauſe of their own volitions---as we truſt hath been ſhewn.

We ſhall alſo pretermit the objection, that the opinion of ſelf-determination makes the creature independent on the creator---yea, brings the creator into a ſtate of dependance on the creature. The reader may, moreover, find the ſeeming weight there is in theſe objections removed, p. 77, 78. of the examination, in a note.

It muſt further be added, that ſome objections Mr. Edwards has made to the ſcheme of liberty in oppoſition to neceſſity are fully anſwered in that eſſay of Dr. Watts's, which he had before him. Mr. Edwards hath propoſed the objections anew without taking notice of the pertinent anſwers the Dr. hath given them. If the reader will turn to the 6th ſection of the Doctor's eſſay, he will there find many objections fully anſwered.

The firſt of the two objections propoſed to be conſidered, and which Mr. Edwards much inſiſts on, is, That on the principles of thoſe who aſſert ſelf-determination, "the will of God is infinitely croſſed by every act of ſin "that happens---that he endures what is infinitely diſagre-"able to him---infinite grief or pain from every ſin"---that creatures have it "in their power to thwart and fruſ-"trate the deſigns of the creator," and to "make him "infinitely the moſt miſerable of all beings." This, he ſays, certainly follows, if ſin be not, upon the whole, agreable to the divine will, and what God chuſeth as part of his infinite ſcheme. *

To this we ſay, firſt, It is acknowledged that moral evil is in its *nature* infinitely contrary to the perfections, law and

* P. 373.

and government of God. Now we may with as much reaſon ſay, he is fruſtrated, grieved and pained by the exiſtence of it viewed in its *nature*, as that he chuſeth and is pleaſed with it viewed in its *conſequences*---even admitting it is for the beſt, all things conſidered, that moral evil hath taken place. So that if it follows from the opinion of ſelf-determination, that God is "infinitely croſſed and "grieved by every individual ſin;" the ſame conſequence follows on Mr. Edwards's own principles. Should it be granted, that every act of ſin is, in *one* view of it, agreable to the will of God, what he produceth by his efficient determination; yet, in *another* view, it is admitted, that it is infinitely contrary and hateful to him. Doth it not then follow, on Mr. Edwards's principles, that God muſt needs be infinitely pained and grieved by it, in proportion to his hatred of it? He vieweth it in its *nature* and *tendency*, as well as in its *conſequences*. Muſt he not then be "infinitely "the moſt miſerable of all beings, as his hatred of ſin is "infinite?"

Secondly, It would be conformable to the advice of a wiſe man of old * to reply to ſuch an objection, that there are plain and poſitive declarations from God himſelf, that he is grieved and repenteth at the ſins of his creatures. We read, that it *repented* the Lord that he had made man, and it *grieved him at his heart*---that he is *angry* with the wicked every day---that they *weary* God by their iniquities---*vex* and *grieve* his ſpirit---walk *contrary* unto him. We read of his heart being *turned* within him, and his *repentings* kindled together. Now which ſhall we admit for truth--theſe expreſs and clear declarations of ſcripture, or the conjectural reaſoning on which the objection proceeds? If it be ſaid, Such ſcriptures are ſpoken *after the manner of men*. The anſwer is, They who *thus* object have no right to this plea. For their own reaſoning (if reaſoning it may be called) repreſents that as a *reality*, which the Scriptures doubtleſs mention *figuratively*, and by way of accommodation to our way of conceiving things. If their notions of the ends of providence in the permiſſion of ſin are not admitted as indubitable truth, they immediately

* Prov. xxvi. 4, 5.

ately infer, that the Deity muſt needs be affected in the ſame manner that human beings are, when any of their ſchemes are fruſtrated---that he is thwarted, pained, grieved, and made infinitely miſerable.

Thirdly, This way of objecting, to ſay the leaſt, is highly irreverent and unbecoming. It has the appearance of an inclination to bring down to a level with man that is a worm, *that* being whoſe glory is above the heavens. It is treating the character and government of the LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT with leſs deference than is ſhewn to an earthly potentate. Such *leveling* notions introduced into religion are of moſt pernicious conſequence. Is the infinite God to be treated with a familiarity, which we ſhould ſcarce preſume to uſe with a fellow-mortal, who happens to be elevated a little above us! Under a notion of doing honor to his ſacred name and government, ſhall we ſpeak of him as though he were *altogether ſuch an one as ourſelves!* Shall we ſubject the abſolutely perfect ſpirit to human paſſions and feelings! Would it be leſs abſurd, or leſs preſumptuous and reproachful, to ſuppoſe *the Godhead like to gold, ſilver, or ſtone, graven by art and man's device?* Doth it become a creature to ſpeak with ſuch freedom of THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE WHO INHABITETH ETERNITY, WHOSE NAME IS HOLY! Angels, who excel in ſtrength, and on whom he ſhines with the full beams of his glory, confeſs their ignorance in the deep things of his nature and providence. They acquieſce in the will of him who is wonderful in counſel---whoſe ways are paſt finding out---and humbly adore his unſearchable wiſdom in his works and adminiſtration. Yet man, inſtead of imitating theſe ſons of God above, would be wiſe beyond the meaſure of his capacity, and rank in the ſcale of beings. With the ſhort line of his own reaſon he would fathom the abyſs of the Deity---and is wont to view him through the dark medium of human prejudices and paſſions. Can God approve our taking the meaſure of his nature from our own? Can he be pleaſed with being brought to a level with creatures, who dwell in houſes of clay, and whoſe foundation is in the duſt? Hath he not admoniſhed us, *My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord.*

Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

What we have further to offer in reply to this objection will properly enough fall under the other objection refered to above; and which we ſhall therefore proceed to conſider. The objection is this: To ſuppoſe moral evil is an effect of free-will abuſed, or of internal cauſation in the creature, is the ſame as to ſuppoſe God himſelf the cauſe of it, ſince he truſted this matter with the creature, who he knew would abuſe liberty. And ſince "the moſt im-"portant meaſures of his conduct towards mankind, all "known to him from the beginning, were formed upon "the ſuppoſition of the being of moral evil, which he "could have prevented, how can the *permiſſion* of it con-"ſiſt with the moral perfections of the Deity," any more than the ſuppoſition of his *efficiency* in it? "It muſt eter-"nally be the ſame thing whether a Creator of infinite "power and knowledge created beings originally wicked "and miſerable, or gave them power to make themſelves "ſo, fore-knowing they would employ that power to their "own deſtruction." *

It is indeed a diſmal dilemma, that God muſt either forcibly prevent wickedneſs, or be himſelf the cauſe of it. The former he hath not done: For it is certain that wickedneſs is in the world. Muſt we then embrace the other part of the dilemma? Is it the moſt rational way of accounting for the exiſtence of ſin to ſay, that God createth beings originally wicked, or infuſeth wickedneſs into them afterwards? What relief can it be to the mind of one who really believes aGod to ſay, that ſin proceeds from him as the cauſe? What anſwer can the maintainer of this principle make to the atheiſt? For whether is better, to ſay there is no God? or to ſay there is a God indeed, but that he, and he only, is the cauſe of wickedneſs? Suppoſe moral evil is for the beſt; it is ſtill a moſt daring aſſertion to ſay, it was beſt the divine efficiency ſhould bring it into exiſtence.

Some argue, if ſin is not for the beſt, it would certainly have been prevented, ſince God foreknew and might have prevented it. On theſe premiſes they conclude, that ſin

* Letters on the origin of evil, p. 102.

muſt be an effect of divine operation and production.---A conſequence which by no means follows; and which involves ſuch impiety, that no ſuppoſeable difficulties attending the exiſtence of moral evil ſhould compel us to admit it. To embrace this conſequence in order to rid ourſelves of one difficulty, would be to involve ourſelves in a far greater---an inextricable one, abſolutely irreconcileable with the moral perfections of God. And when he is rob'd of *theſe*, his glory is taken from him: The name of a Deity may be retained, but no more.

On the hypotheſis before us, how is it poſſible to know that God is holy? that he loves righteouſneſs, and hates wickedneſs? For can he hate the effects of his own producing---the operation of his own power---his own acts? By ſuppoſition all ſin is his act---the fruit of his agency or efficiency. Why then is not ſin very good, as much as any part of the Creator's work? If the diſpoſition in abandoned ſinners and apoſtate ſpirits, no leſs than the contrary temper in ſaints and angels, is the product of divine energy, by what rule can we determine that holineſs is pleaſing, and wickedneſs offenſive, to him? Though the operations of our own minds clearly declare to us, that moral evil is contrary and odious to God; yet what elſe can we conclude than that thoſe perceptions are a deluſion? And if our own feelings are deluſive, this particular impreſſion or idea, that there is a God and moral governor, may be ſo. The ſuppoſition of the exiſtence of matter or ſpirit may be a deluſion. Our own conſciouſneſs may be ſo. We may be deluded in ſuppoſing that we ourſelves exiſt, though the very ſuppoſition clearly implies our exiſtence. No "paradoxes were ever brought forth by the moſt abject "ſuperſtition, or the moſt frantic enthuſiaſm, more in-"credible" than the wiſdom of the preſent age hath produced. To ſuppoſe that the alwiſe Creator and governor of the world effects by his own agency what is infinitely repugnant to his pure and holy nature, is as marvellous a paradox as was ever publiſhed. We might rather ſay, that his wiſdom required all rebels ſhould periſh everlaſtingly, than ſay, that an holy God firſt effected by his own energy their rebellion, as the medium of diſplaying his own perfections,

perfections, and communicating the greateſt happineſs to the univerſal ſyſtem. We might with as much appearance of reaſon ſay, that the happineſs of the univerſe is not the care of the infinite Creator and parent of it, as ſay, that he produceth moral evil as a neceſſary means of this happineſs. As well might we ſay, that wiſdom required God ſhould not create the worlds---ſhould not form creatures capable of moral evil. What weight, then, ſhould be allowed to objections which proceed on a ſuppoſition ſo reproachful to that being whoſe work is perfect---? a God of truth, and without iniquity? A ſcheme founded in a principle ſo horrible, ſo ſhockingly abſurd and impious as this, that an holy, wiſe and good God is at the ſame time the efficient of ſin, and an avenger to execute wrath upon the ſubjects of it, neither demands, nor will admit any other anſwer than that in the book, of Job, *Far be it from God that he ſhould do wickedneſs, and from the Almighty, that he ſhould commit iniquity.* No man ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be in the leaſt ſtaggered by objections formed on the ſuppoſition of the truth of ſuch a ſcheme, whether he is able diſtinctly to anſwer the objections or not. An attempt to ſupport ſuch a ſcheme deſerves to be rejected with contempt and abhorrence. No poſſible objections founded on ſuch a baſis can have any weight by reaſon of the TERRIBILITY of the hypotheſis itſelf. The public will not think there is occaſion for, or even propriety in, taking up time to conſider objections ſtated on this baſis. 'Tis ſufficient to ſay with the excellent Mr. Howe, "That God "doth by an *efficacious* influence move and determine men "to wicked actions, I moſt *reſolvedly* deny."

Some ſeem to ſuppoſe, that the "goodneſs of God, or "his rectitude, require the exertion of his utmoſt power "for preventing evil." But this "is not to be imagined-- "The wiſdom of God requires that his operation ſhould "be according to the order which he has eſtabliſhed, and "to the nature of things which he has wiſely framed to "be preſerved inviolable. As in the government of the "inanimate creatures, he acts *ſuitably* to their natures, moving and diſpoſing of them by the irreſiſtible determination of his ſovereign will, ſo his influence on moral a-

"gents

" agents is ſuch as does not deſtroy the eſſential powers " which he has given them."

" Let it be more particularly conſidered, firſt, that perhaps there is not, nor can be, any being of a limited underſtanding above the poſſibility of being miſled in its moral conduct; and all the orders of created free agents muſt naturally be in a ſtate of trial, till by a right uſe of liberty their integrity is confirmed---Every imperfect agent, having a variety in his frame, muſt have propenſions to particular objects which are adapted to the indigence of his condition; which propenſions in a regular moral conſtitution, are under the government of conſcience; but their being does not depend upon it. They are excited by the preſence of their ſuitable objects, or perhaps without it; and though their firſt motions, and perhaps their continuance in the mind for ſome time, may be innocent, yet it is eaſily conceivable that they may demand a gratification, in circumſtances and degrees, which conſcience forbids."

" Here then is a tendency or temptation to evil, from which the creature by the right uſe of its own powers may eſcape, and thereby be more confirmed in virtue; but a poſſibility of falling and corrupting itſelf ſeems to be inſeperable from every finite nature; and even the danger of it ſeems naturally to attend the ſtate of all finite moral agents, during ſome part of their exiſtence---We know that we are capable both of doing right and wrong; and our moral powers ſo conſtituted, with ſuch a freedom, we cannot help thinking a very high privilege; whereby we are raiſed above the condition of many other beings, and have the eſſential foundation of noble enjoyments."

" Secondly, The human mind neceſſarily appears to itſelf the cauſe both of the moral good and evil which is done by it---The capacity is derived wholly from God, and is preſerved by him; the particular determination is from ourſelves; only influenced, ſo far as is conſiſtent with our free agency, by ſetting before us ſufficient motives to good. Yet the mind has natural power of making a wrong choice. We muſt then be condemned by our own hearts, in charging the human conſtitution as defective

tive to the purpoſes of virtue, and thereby of happineſs, and impeaching the goodneſs of its author; ſince we are conſcious to ourſelves, that we are furniſhed with all that is neceſſary, and know of no power that is wanting to our doing good and eſchewing evil."

" Thirdly, Whereas it is alledged that ſince God foreſaw men would abuſe their liberty,---goodneſs requir'd that the occaſion of ſuch an abuſe ſhould have been prevented. The anſwer is,---that the futurity of the actions of free agents, of which themſelves are the ſole cauſes, is no more determined by the divine appointment, than the actual production of them is affected by his power."

" Fourthly, It muſt be acknowledged that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, God---could have created moral agents much more perfect than men are; given them a greater meaſure of knowledge; ſet the motives of virtue in ſo ſtrong a light before them, as more effectually to ſecure their attachment to it---could have placed them in a ſtate much more free from temptations, and conſequently in leſs danger of making defection---could have prevented the conjuncture of circumſtances in which he foreſaw liberty could be abuſed. But---ſhall we take upon us to ſay, that the order of the creation, and the ends for which it was made, did not require, or even allow, that there ſhould be ſuch a rank of beings in it, conſtituted as we are, with underſtanding, liberty, and moral affections, but capable of ſin, tempted to it, and thereby in danger of becoming unhappy through their own fault? or that the preſent conſtitution, in this branch of it which relates to free agents, is inconſiſtent with the wiſdom and moral perfections of the ſupreme Being." *

* Abernethy's diſcourſes on divine goodneſs.

SECTION

SECTION X.

On metaphyſical reaſoning. *

Hic labor ille domûs, et INEXTRICABILIS ERROR.

ÆNEID. LIB. VI.

WE mean not to ſpeak contemptibly of metaphyſics, as ſuch, and properly applied. There is probably no ſcience but may (in addition to its advantages in other reſpects) claim ſome merit as being ſubſervient, more or leſs, to the elucidation and confirmation of religion and morals. Logic, natural philoſophy, the mathematics, polite literature have been greatly ſerviceable to mankind in this view. And poſſibly metaphyſic hath been of ſome ſmall advantage in the ſame reſpect: Though the injury which the miſapplication of it hath done religion, at one time and another, if put into the oppoſite ſcale, might far outweigh it's advantages.

Admitting

* "The word *metaphyſic*, according to vulgar uſe, is applied to all diſquiſitions concerning things immaterial. In this ſenſe, the plaineſt account of the faculties of the mind, and of the principles of moral and natural religion, would be termed *metaphyſic*. Such metaphyſic, however, we are ſo far from deſpiſing or cenſuring, that we account it the ſublimeſt and moſt uſeful part of ſcience.

Thoſe arguments alſo and illuſtrations in the abſtract philoſophy, which are not obvious to ordinary underſtandings, are ſometimes called *metaphyſical*. But as the principles of this philoſophy, however well expreſſed, appear ſomewhat abſtruſe to one who is but a novice in the ſtudy; and as very plain principles may ſeem intricate in an author who is inattentive to his expreſſion, as the beſt authors ſometimes are, it would be unfair to reject, or conceive a prejudice againſt, every doctrine in morals that is not perfectly free from obſcurity. Yet a *continued obſcurity, in matters whereof every man ſhould be a competent judge*, cannot fail to breed a ſuſpicion, either that the doctrine is faulty, or that the writer is not equal to his ſubject.

The term *metaphyſical*, in thoſe paſſages of this book where it is expreſſive of cenſure, will be found to allude to that mode of abſtract inveſtigation, ſo common among the modern ſceptics and ſchoolmen, which is ſupported, either wholly by an *ambiguous* and *indefinite phraſeology*, or by that in conjunction with a partial experience; and which ſeldom fails to lead to ſuch concluſions as contradict matter of fact, or truths of indiſputable authority."

Beattie on truth, p. 401, 402.

Admitting metaphyſics may be profitably applied to religious ſubjects; yet (without undertaking to preſcribe the exact limits) it will doubtleſs be granted

---- *Sunt certi denique fines,*
Quos ultra citraq; nequit conſiſtere rectum. HOR.

It may be ſubmitted to public conſideration, whether firſt principles can, without danger, be brought to the teſt of metaphyſics. The being of a God we call one of theſe principles; the immediate conſciouſneſs mankind have of liberty and accountableneſs, another; and ſince the ſuppoſition that God is the cauſe of ſin wholly robs him of his moral character, we venture to add, that the negative of this is another firſt principle. The works of creation without us, and the witneſs for God within us, inſtantly atteſt the truth in theſe points, as ſoon as they are mentioned. 'Tis very queſtionable whether metaphyſics have been, or can be, uſed to any advantage, on theſe manifeſt points, even againſt the ſophiſtry of infidels. We ſee not why a philoſopher and metaphyſician is not obliged to take up with that evidence here which affords clear conviction to men of plain underſtanding. When believers in God have refered the ſophiſtical reaſoner againſt his being and perfections to that inconteſtible proof of them which the viſible world exhibits, they have done their duty---all that is required, or that can indeed be done. Abſtract reaſoning, it may be preſumed, will afford no conviction, where the conſtant atteſtations to the being of a God in creation and providence do not. The oppoſing metaphyſics to metaphyſics will keep the infidel in countenance. It is an intimation to him, that he has ſome reaſon for his incredulity. For he pretty naturally concludes, that the being of a God would not be brought into the field of debate by thoſe who believe it, were there not ſome reaſon to doubt it. Principles manifeſt on firſt propoſal, if men will open their eyes, neither need nor can receive any aſſiſtance from metaphyſics; and thoſe who would make them undergo the peril of a metaphyſical ſcrutiny may find they have expoſed them to be rejected.

The other two principles mentioned above are as evident

as

as the being of a God, and require no metaphyſical proof---viz. God cannot be tempted with evil, and tempteth no man ; (or, in other words, is not the cauſe of ſin ;) and that mankind are not neceſſitated or deſtined to chuſe and act in every inſtance as they do, but might chuſe and act otherwiſe--- at leaſt in ſome inſtances. Metaphyſics have been ſo far from ſtrengthening the evidence of theſe obvious truths, that, on the contrary, hereby they have been perplexed and made dubious---yea, ſome ſeem to think they have demonſtrated them to be falſe.

Not one in an hundred of mankind can apprehend a metaphyſical proof of religion---a ſubject in which all ranks are alike intereſted. Common people are, indeed much better phyſicians, than metaphyſicians. Nor is every good natural Philoſopher ſkilled in moral philoſophy or verſed in the abſtract nature of immaterial beings. It is ſometimes ſaid, that phyſic oftner kills than cures. Such is metaphyſic to the mind. Where it prevents or removes a ſlight moral indiſpoſition in one inſtance, it probably brings on a fatal diſtemper in more inſtances. Nor is a corroſive ever eligible, when a lenitive will anſwer the end.

The plaineſt and moſt important principles of revelation would not endure a metaphyſical diſquiſition. At leaſt, the ſacred writers have not uſed ſuch reaſoning---not thoſe of them who were beſt able to reaſon in this manner. Moſes, Iſaiah, Ezekiel and St. Paul have not. Unparralleled ſamples of *eloquence* and *the ſublime* have been often produced from their writings ; but we don't call to mind that any inſtances of their *metaphyſical* reaſoning have been adduced. Inſtances of ſtrong reaſoning their writings abound with particularly St. Paul's. But he diſclaims metaphyſics---not ſurely as being above his abilities; but as of no uſe on the moſt eſſential point of religion---rather injurious than helpful. As he is the principal new-teſtament writer, we beg leave to make a few ſtrictures on his character and writings, with a more immediate view to the ſubject of the preſent ſection.

He was poſſeſſed of an " amazing force of genius, as well as invincible courage, and a ſpirit of patience, which no fatigue could overcome, and which no ſufferings or trials could exhauſt. He was verſed in the learned arts,

and

and able to combat the Jewiſh doctors and Pagan philoſophers with their own arms." * His noble birth, added to his natural genius, literary acquirements, ardent zeal and unſhaken firmneſs of mind, ſeemed, even *in the eye of the world*, to qualify him for a principal inſtrument in the defence and propagation of the goſpel. Did then the author of Chriſtianity, in the appointment of St. Paul to this buſineſs, proceed on maxims of worldly wiſdom? By no means. Theſe accompliſhments, which diſtinguiſhed St. Paul from his fellow-apoſtles, were the moſt powerful obſtacles to his embracing Chriſtianity. They were employed to root out the goſpel. No one perſecuted it more furiouſly than he---no one deſpiſed it more. But when it pleaſed God *to reveal his Son in him*, his ſhining talents were fervently applied to the purpoſe for which they were given, and became eminently ſubſervient to the furtherance of the faith, which once he deſtroyed. Let us reflect a moment in what manner he uſed them as an apoſtle of Chriſt---as his example is for ſucceeding miniſters.

Here we have many ſtriking inſtances of his zeal, eloquence and reaſoning. We mean to take notice of the laſt more eſpecially---his reaſoning with Jewiſh doctors and pagan philoſophers---on the principles of natural religion, and the revelations of God to the Jews. He well knew what expectations of a magnificent temporal prince the doctors of the law had raiſed in mankind---how oppoſite the Chriſtian ſyſtem was to the reigning philoſophy of the world---particularly what exception the pride of the Grecian philoſophers took to it on account of its plainneſs and ſimplicity. He would naturally alſo call to mind his own prejudices againſt the goſpel on theſe accounts. And as he had frequent occaſion to confer with men of this character at Jeruſalem, Rome, Athens and Corinth, it may be worth while to enquire in what manner he reaſoned with them? Metaphyſical reaſoning would have been beſt accommodated to their taſte: And if ever there is a propriety in introducing this kind of reaſoning into religion, Paul had occaſion for it, and was able to manage it to advantage. It might particularly be conjectured, that

* Moſheim, Vol. I. P. 25.

a man of Paul's learning would have offered a laboured diſſertation on the abſtract nature of the ſupreme ſpirit, (which would have been reaſoning metaphyſically) when encountered by the learned philoſophers from among the Epicureans and Stoics; when accuſed of being a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods---when brought unto Areopagus---ſurrounded by philoſophers, ſenators and plebeians--undertaking to convince them of their ſuperſtition, and reclaim them from their idolatry. But to lead them to the knowledge of the true God, (their ignorance of whom was proclaimed in the inſcription on one of their altars) what method did he take? Obſervable to this purpoſe is his ſpeech, while he ſtood in the midſt of Mars-hill. "Ye "men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too "ſuperſtitious---God that made the world, and all things "therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, "dwelleth not in temples made with hands: Neither is "worſhiped with mens hands, as though he needed any "thing; ſeeing he giveth to all life, and breath and all "things."

How plain, and yet how forceable, is this reaſoning?---adapted equally to wiſe and unwiſe. He does not diſcourſe as a philoſopher would on the nature of ſpirit abſtracted from matter, but makes a familiar appeal to the works of viſible creation and providence, in proof of the exiſtence and perfection of God, and thence infers the accountableneſs of mankind to him, as moral governor and judge. This was to reaſon as became a miniſter of that maſter who ſent him not to preach with wiſdom of words.

To the ſame purpoſe he obſerves, that the works of viſible nature, and particularly the operations of their own minds, ſhould have been regarded by the pagan Romans as demonſtrable proofs of the being, attributes and providence of God---that their not being induced to glorify him as God, on this clear evidence, was ſo far from being any argument of their ſuperior wiſdom, that, on the contrary, it proved them inexcuſeable and fools, notwithſtanding all their profeſſions of wiſdom. † In like manner he ſays, God left not himſelf without witneſs among the heathen,

† Rom. i. 19, 20; 22. ch. ii. 14, 15.

heathen, in that he did good, and gave rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons. *

Theſe inſtances are examples of Paul's reaſoning with Pagan idolaters. He argues from the works of creation and providence, which lie open alike to learned and unlearned. Here is no abſtract, metaphyſical reaſoning---all is eaſy to be underſtood. And he declares he *had rather ſpeak five words with his underſtanding, that he might teach others, than ten thouſand words in an unknown tongue.* §

When he treated with the Jewiſh doctors, or the people of Iſrael, he did not (as before heathen) recur to the works of nature; but taking the principles of natural religion for granted, he reaſoned with them out of thoſe ſcriptures, which they acknowledged were given by inſpiration of God. And though all his writings diſcover the good reaſoner, as well as the good man, full of the holy Ghoſt; yet we do not recollect that he reaſoned metaphyſically, either before Jews or heathen---Great plainneſs of ſpeech appears in all his reaſonings, as became a miniſter of the new teſtament. † He was not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt before the Jewiſh Rabbi's or pagan philoſophers, although it's diſtinguiſhing doctrine was to the former a ſtumbling block, and to the latter fooliſhneſs. The Greeks held the *goſpel revelation* in great contempt, becauſe they found not that wiſdom of this world which they ſought in it. The apoſtle held *their* worldly wiſdom in equal contempt, becauſe it ſet itſelf in oppoſition to that goſpel which is the power of God, and the wiſdom of God. He came not with excellency of ſpeech or of wiſdom (which he, if any man, could have uſed) declaring the teſtimony of God. His ſpeech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom; but in demonſtration of the ſpirit, and of power, that the faith of Chriſtians might ſtand, not in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God. He with his brethren renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifeſtation of the truth commending themſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God. I determined, ſays he to the Corinthians, not to know any thing among

* Acts xiv. 17. § 1 Cor. xiv. 19. † 11 Cor. iii. 12.

among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified---and expreſſeth his fears, leſt by any means the minds of his Chriſtian friends at Corinth ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt. He enters a caution to the Coloſſians, Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt. He admoniſheth Timothy to avoid oppoſitions of ſcience falſely ſo called---to withdraw from ſuch as dote about queſtions and ſtrifes of words. Upon the whole he declares, that the world by wiſdom knew not God---that what the pride of philoſophy ſtigmatized as the fooliſhneſs of preaching, was the ſcheme infinite wiſdom had determined upon for the ſalvation of believers---that the fooliſhneſs of God was wiſer than men, and the weakneſs of God ſtronger than men.---Thus was fulfilled what was foretold, "I will deſtroy the wiſdom of "the wiſe, and will bring to nothing the underſtanding "of the prudent. Where is the wiſe? where is the ſcribe? "where is the diſputer of this world? hath not GOD "made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world?"

From what has been obſerved it appears, that the chief of the apoſtles, notwithſtanding his learning, was ſo far from making uſe of metaphyſical reaſoning in treating with thoſe who believed the goſpel, that he made no uſe of it for the conviction of infidels, either among Jews or heathen---that he rather diſclaimed it as dangerous, than patronized it as helpful, to the cauſe of truth. Speaking of his own miniſtry, and that of his fellow-apoſtles, he ſaith, We ſpeak not as pleaſing men, but God who trieth our hearts. For neither at any time uſed we flattering words---nor of men ſought we glory. And doubtleſs the *fleſhly wiſdom* mention'd 2 Cor. i. 12. denotes the ſame as the wiſdom of this world, mentioned in the former epiſtle, through which it came to paſs that the goſpel was deſpiſed and ſet at naught; and in oppoſition to which the apoſtles of Chriſt had their converſation in the world, *in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity*, by the grace of God.

It may be ſaid, St. Paul muſt have uſed abſtract reaſoning on ſome occaſions, or his beloved brother Peter would not have teſtified, that there are things in his epiſtles *hard*

to be underſtood. But may not this be owing wholly to the nature of epiſtolary and controverſial writings? their referring to rites and cuſtoms ſince altered or laid aſide? or to diſputes then agitated, with which diſtant places or after ages cannot be ſuppoſed to be perfectly acquainted? A general hint might be ſufficient for the information of thoſe to whom his epiſtles were immediately wrote. Were ſuch hints as well underſtood by others, his controverſial pieces might be as plain as any other part of his writings. But if we have not the means of underſtanding them ſo clearly, 'tis a juſt concluſion, that we are not ſo nearly concern'd in them.

"It is become a faſhion," ſays Dr. Sherlock, "to dreſs "up the great doctrines and proofs of religion in *axioms*, "and *theorems* and *demonſtrations*---Had the goſpel ſet out "at firſt with this air of mathematics, it had loſt one "ſtrong proof of its divine original, ariſing from the "*plainneſs* of its doctrine, and the *ſimplicity* of the evidence "which was offered in its behalf; which made the goſpel "to be a proper tender to all mankind."

But it is more than time to remind the reader what improvement Mr. Edwards hath made of metaphyſical reaſoning. This we ſhall do by adducing a number of inſtances, which may ſerve to ſhew the precarioufneſs, ſubtilty and danger of ſuch reaſoning. All the argumentation of his book really concludes in this, that God is the cauſe of ſin. This is the capital error, which, we truſt, a profeſſing people will never admit. And though he doth not acknowledge it, yet it muſt be embraced if his foundation be firm. The following ſpecimen may ſhew, that his concluſions are by no means fairly drawn from his premiſes---or that one or the other are falſe.

Becauſe inert matter cannot begin or alter its own motion; hence Mr. Edwards infers, that an intelligent ſpirit can in no caſe begin or alter its own volitions and actions.

If there can be no effect without a cauſe; he infers, that there can be no principle of efficiency in moral agents.

If a moral agent is ſuppoſed to determine his own volitions; then he infers, that the act of volition itſelf is ſelf-determined, and hath no cauſe.

He takes for granted, that volition, even with reſpect to the moſt caſual thing, is an act of preference; and then concludes, that, in the moſt indifferent thing, there muſt be an apparent reaſon for willing as we do rather than otherwiſe.

Becauſe a perfect equilibrium or abſolute indifference is not eſſential to liberty; he concludes, that a power to chuſe one thing or its oppoſite is incompatible with liberty.

If every moral volition hath ſome motive, then that motive is the cauſe of the volition---and therefore moral agents themſelves are not the cauſe.

Becauſe a thing is in our power, if conſequent to our election; therefore it is in our power, though the election of it is not.

Becauſe the oppoſition of one's will to what is required, may be no excuſe; therefore the want of a power to be willing is none.

(His reaſoning on ſelf-determination may be well ſummed up thus: Becauſe a man cannot take the ſecond ſtep without the firſt; therefore he cannot take the firſt without a previous one.)

Becauſe Adam's lapſe may be the ſource of a blameable impotency in his poſterity; therefore original impotency in himſelf might be blameable.

Becauſe the eſſence of ſin lies in its nature; therefore the doer of wickedneſs is not the cauſe of it---and therefore it is no reproach to ſay, that God is the cauſe of ſin.

It is laid down for a principle, that a creature never commits ſin till divine influence and aſſiſtance is withdrawn; hence it is infered (not unjuſtly, if the principle aſſumed be true) that man's firſt apoſtacy was owing to the want or withdraw of divine influence and aſſiſtance.

Becauſe natural (or neceſſary) effects, and moral habits of holineſs, proceed from the poſitive influence and exertion of the Deity; therefore moral evil doth.

Becauſe God is neceſſarily holy, &c. therefore the holineſs or pollution of creatures is neceſſary---therefore a real and original neceſſity of ſin is conſiſtent with blame and puniſhment.

Becauſe God permits ſinners to harden themſelves; therefore

therefore their obduracy is the effect of his ordination, diſpoſal and determination, as the cauſe.

Becauſe God certainly foreknows the ſinful volitions and actions of his creatures ; therefore they are neceſſary ---therefore they proceed from his efficient determination.

If we are not certain ſin is not for the beſt ; then we are certain it is for the beſt.

Becauſe God brings good out of moral evil ; therefore it is beſt---therefore it is a neceſſary means of the greateſt good---therefore it is part of the divine plan---therefore the divine perfections could not have been manifeſted, had not ſin entred the world---therefore glorified intelligences are preſerved in their allegiance through terror of the puniſhment of the damned---therefore what is infinitely oppoſite to the divine nature, law and government is not contrary, but agreeable, to his will---therefore God is the efficient cauſe of ſin, and infinitely pleaſed with the great good it brings to the world, otherwiſe he would have prevented it. *

This

* What WONDERS hath metaphyſic wrought! The Ariſtotelian philoſopher can demonſtrate, that the mind is material. "The Carteſian, on the contrary, ſpiritualizeth body, and its qualities." He can demonſtrate, that "ſound, taſte, ſmell, color, heat and cold, which the vulgar take to be qualities of body, are not" ſo ; "but meer ſenſations of the mind." Yea, "extenſion, figure, and all the primary qualities" have, by later philoſophers, been held "to be mere ſenſations, no leſs than the ſecondary qualities. By a kind of metaphyſical ſublimation all the qualities of matter are converted into ſenſations," and "the exiſtence of what we ſee and feel" is denied. 'Tis "a vulgar error" to ſuppoſe there is "a material world."

To perfect this ſyſtem of philoſophy, ſpirit as well as body is at length "turned out of exiſtence by this ſhort dilemma : Either they are ideas of ſenſation or reflection, or they are not. If they are,—they can have no exiſtence but when we are conſcious of them ; if they are not ideas of ſenſation or reflection, then body aud ſpirit, cauſe and effect, time and ſpace, are words without any meaning." † And thus a total ſcepticiſm is introduced.

One writer ‡ can demonſtrate by metaphyſic, that our feeling of liberty is a deluſive ſenſe implanted in us. Another, that a perſon may be regenerated, and yet unjuſtified, deſtitute of faith and holineſs, and continue, for a length of time, a child of the devil. ‖ Some writers of *our own country* have made ſuch improvement on metaphyſic as to demonſtrate, (againſt the cleareſt and moſt deciſive language of the ſcriptures) that the word of truth is not the medium of regeneration.

"When a man ſuffers himſelf to be reaſoned out of the principles "of common ſenſe by metaphyſical arguments, this, ſays Profeſſor "Reid,

† Reid on the mind. Chap. vii. ‡ Kaims ‖ Van Maſtricht.

This is a juſt repreſentation of Mr. Edwards's reaſoning, though he is not *explicit* in the whole of it. If it ſhould be thought, that in ſuch a way of reaſoning any thing may be proved by any thing, it will, doubtleſs, be acknowledged, that it is neither eligible nor ſafe to bring the principles of religion to ſuch a trial. We cannot be perſuaded, that the pains taken in this way is doing ſervice to men of thought and contemplation: And what occaſion Mr. Edwards could have for it, ſeeing he "had to do with "thoſe who believe the bible," we cannot imagine. It tends to bewilder common people---to miſlead them, it may be, fatally. It gives occaſion to infidels and libertines. Nor can it ſeem ſtrange, if from thinking favorably of ſuch a religious ſyſtem as his book contains, men come to be unſettled and ſceptical as to any religion.

Under a notion of doing honor to the divine perfections and government, men may puſh their enquiries far beyond their capacity and the means of their knowledge. Inſtead of ſailing along the ſhore with their ſlender bark, they run the hazzard of launching forth into the main ocean, and plunge themſelves in deep waters. In conſequence of ſuch bold enquiries, ſuch efforts to fathom the abyſs of the Deity, no wonder hard and reproachful things are ſaid of him; which, however piouſly they may be intended, are extremely injurious to religion. It ſeems as if an honeſt intention can very hardly excuſe the freedom and confidence with which ſome ſpeak of that Being who poſſetheth infinite perfection, and whoſe nature and operations are unſearchable. As a fine writer * hath obſerved, "The Deity is to the human minds, what the main ocean is to narrow veſſels: They may take in as much of his nature as their ſcanty dimenſions can admit, and yet there will remain an infinite ſurplus ſtill, which they want capacities to receive."

"Reid, we may call *metaphyſical lunacy*; which differs from the other "ſpecies of the diſtemper in this, that it is not continued, but inter-"mittent: It is apt to ſeize the patient in ſolitary and ſpeculative "moments; but when he enters into ſociety, common ſenſe recovers "her authority." (P. 379.)

* SEED.

SECTION

SECTION XI.

Recapitulation.

MR. Edwards's book was wrote with a view to ſubvert the opinion of ſelf-determination, and eſtabliſh the doctrine of univerſal neceſſity. He endeavoreth to prove, that the volitions and actions of moral agents have a like dependance on a cauſe without themſelves as effects in the natural world---that all events, from the beginning of the world to the end, are unalterably, unavoidably and circumſtantially determined. And while he teacheth, that this neceſſity, in reference to moral events, is of the moral kind, and therefore ſuppoſeth it conſiſtent with the moſt perfect liberty, he yet maintains that moral actions are all ſubject to an original real neceſſity as abſolute as natural.

In ſupport of this general ſyſtem, he ſets himſelf to ſhew, What determines the will? and it is particularly and very largely inſiſted, as a thing of chief importance, that the will is always determined by the higheſt motive, or by what appears moſt agreable to the mind; which is called a moral cauſe, and the determination of the will hereby a neceſſary determination.

Three things have been propoſed in the examination of this ſyſtem. Firſt, An enquiry into the ſuppoſed connection of volition with the higheſt motive. Secondly, The indiſſoluble connection of moral cauſes and effects. And thirdly, An attempt to ſhew, that internal, moral liberty, as diſtinguiſhed from external or animal, belongs to moral agents---that Mr. Edwards's ſcheme of neceſſity, if admitted in theory, is not applicable to practice.

Under the firſt of theſe heads, it was ſhewn, that if the higheſt motive were allowed to be the *next* and *immediate* cauſe of volition, this is no reſolution of the queſtion, as it doth not ſhew the *original* and *true* cauſe thereof. The enquiry is not purſued to the end, the *foundation* of the will's determination is not diſcovered. What it is that gives cauſal influence to motive, or wherein its energy

 conſiſts,

conſiſts, remains ſtill to be pointed out. But it was endeavored to be proved, in the next place, by various conſiderations, and particularly from Mr. Edwards's own authority and reaſoning, that in truth the ſtrongeſt motive is not the moral cauſe of volition, and that there is no neceſſary coincidence between the one and the other. And laſtly, that volition is not the proper cauſe of external action, any more than the higheſt motive is of volition.

After the mention of ſome preliminary principles, it was enquired, under the next head of the propoſed examination, whether the wills of moral agents are neceſſarily determined by an extrinſic, or by an intrinſic cauſe, and whether there can be natural liberty without moral, on Mr. Edwards's ſcheme. This ſcheme was repreſented as making God the anthor of ſin, by plain and direct conſequence---the ſuppoſed advantage of ſin to the univerſe was briefly noticed; and general obſervations & reflections ſubjoined, with a view to make it manifeſt, that if no being can, or ever could, chuſe or act otherwiſe in any caſe, 'tis very immaterial by what name this neceſſity is called, ſince a neceſſity more abſolute cannot be conceived of---that the runing up moral events, like natural, through a chain of ſecond cauſes to the firſt, is confounding the agency of intelligent creatures with mechaniſm---making their volitions and conduct the agency of the Deity, properly ſpeaking---or rather, that, upon the principles of Mr. Edwards, the Deity himſelf is not an agent, but an inſtrument of neceſſity and fate. There is no ſelf-mover---direction---determination, or ſource of activity, in the univerſe. Wherein our author profeſſeth himſelf a friend of liberty, he either contradicts his own principles, or allows of no liberty that is of any moment, or at all connected with moral agency.

We endeavoured, under the laſt branch of our general deſign, to exhibit a ſcheme more conſonant to reaſon and truth; ſhewing from the diſcernment that diſtinguiſheth moral agents from the brute-creation, and their capacity of chuſing and acting otherwiſe than they in fact do, that internal moral liberty and ſelf-determination belong to them---that it no way interferes with this liberty to admit the exhibition and influence of motives in moral volitions.

The

The ſcheme of neceſſity exhibited in Mr. Edwards's book, if true in ſpeculation, was, upon the whole, ſhewn to be falſe in its practical application---of moſt dangerous tendency and conſequence. A ſpecimen was alſo annexed of Mr. Edwards's agreeing, in his leading ſentiments, with antient and modern fataliſts.

This is a view of the ſubject ſo far as it was conſidered in our former publication. In the preſent, the ſame general deſign has been reſumed and continued. A further proof of ſelf-determination hath been adduced from the capacity in moral agents of deliberating, ſuſpending, &c.---the diſtinction of rational agency from animal has been ſtated---a diſtinction entirely confounded in Mr. Edwards's book, which has been further ſhewn to contain a full denial of moral liberty. It has been argued, that events in the moral world are not *uniform*, as in the material--that the Deity muſt be the efficient cauſe of moral evil, or it hath no ſuch cauſe, unleſs ſelf-determination be admitted---that motives do not neceſſitate, nor are the cauſe of volition, which hath a moral perſon or agent for its cauſe. The diſtinction of natural and moral neceſſity hath been particularly attended to, and, in Mr. Edwards's uſe of it, ſhewn to be groundleſs; ſince, if he means any thing, a ſtrict and abſolute neceſſity is equally intended by the former as by the latter---we have touched the argument from the neceſſity of the divine moral rectitude, and preſume it was made to appear, that there is no infering herefrom a ſtrict neceſſity in the moral volitions and actions of creatures. From Mr. Edwards's notion of neceſſity, it follows, that God is the author or cauſe of ſin, or it hath no cauſe. This ſame concluſion has further been ſhewn to follow from his plan of the origin of evil, which we have diſtinctly examined--a plan which, indeed, renders the exiſtence of ſin forever impoſſible. His hypotheſis, which derives moral evil from the withdraw of divine influence and aſſiſtance, has been ſhewn not to differ materially, either from theirs who explicitly aſcribe it to divine efficiency, or from theirs who ſuppoſe God might make creatures originally vicious. The only conſiſtent hypotheſis is that which derives evil from the abuſe of moral liberty. The diſtinction of the eſſence of

virtue

virtue and vice from their cauſe, has, we flatter ourſelves, been evinced to be futile and evaſive, by no means to anſwer Mr. Edwards's purpoſe, however important he eſteemed it, and how much ſoever his principles required it. It has been conſidered, whether moral evil is indeed beſt for the world; or ſuppoſe it is, whether it be beſt that God ſhould effect it by his agency. We have alſo examined the argument from divine preſcience, and particularly ſhewn, that the certainty of moral events is altogether different from neceſſity, the former not affecting their nature, or the manner of their coming to paſs, or any way influencing them, as the latter doth---that preſcience ſtands not in the relation of cauſe to the things foreknown. Texts of ſcripture uſually alledged in ſupport of the ſcheme of neceſſity have been ſhewn to be miſconſtrued. A reply has been made to ſome principal objections, and a diſſertation added on metaphyſical reaſoning, ſhewing that it rather ſerves to bewilder than elucidate the preſent ſubject. We have, therefore, made but little uſe of it; although it has in ſome meaſure been evinced, (as we ſuppoſe) in the courſe of our examination, that the metaphyſician is eaſily repulſed with his own weapons.

In the examination ſome arguments were touched, among many which occur'd, evincing the aſpect Mr. Edwards's ſcheme hath on the moral perfections and government of God, and its conſequent practical tendency. Other arguments have been now mentioned with the ſame view. The oppoſite truth was there exhibited in part; we have now further explain'd ourſelves, and purſued the deſign before opened, as far as appeared needful at preſent. To ſave the trouble of repetition, we have ſeveral times refered the reader to things ſaid in the examination.

Our aim has been to attend to the principal point in debate, not to dwell on leſſer and circumſtantial things. If the former hath been kept in view, it may be reaſonably requeſted, that if any gentleman ſhall think it needful to publiſh remarks on what we have written, he will not make incidental things a principal object of attention. To divert his own or the reader's mind from what is moſt material would be alike injuſtice to both, as well as uncandid to

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the examiner. The main objection to Mr. Edwards's ſcheme is, that he argues for a neceſſity which can be defended on this only hypotheſis, that God is the cauſe of ſin. To this ſingle queſtion, the whole controverſy is reducible. Whoever would defend his book muſt either ſhew, that the leading principles of it do not ſuppoſe the deity to be the *efficient* of moral evil; or elſe that ſuch a ſuppoſition is no reproach to his character and government. We dare affirm he is not the efficient cauſe of moral evil; yea, ſhould we preſume to affirm that he is this cauſe, it would, we doubt not in the leaſt, be ſtriking at the foundation of all religion.

The pulic attention and candor would now have been aſked no longer, had it not been the opinion of a number of reſpectable gentlemen, that we are called upon to take ſome notice of the "eſſay on moral agency" &c. through which are interſperſed remarks on what we wrote before, and in ſome parts of which the author has condeſcended more profeſſedly to attend to the examination. Our ſtrictures on this eſſay ſhall be diſpatched with all convenient brevity.

STRICTURES.

STRICTURES on "an eſſay on moral agency:" (So called) "Containing remarks on a late "anonymous publication, entitled, *An* "*examination of the late Rev'd Preſident* "*Edwards's enquiry on freedom of will.* "By Stephen Weſt, A. M. "Paſtor of the church in Stockbridge."

THIS eſſay contains ſcarce any thing new. But few arguments are advanced in it, except ſuch as Mr. Edwards had made uſe of, and handled with more appearance of reaſon. In examining Mr. Edwards, we have ſufficiently replied to the moſt material things in Mr. Weſt. Mr. Weſt, in denying original righteouſneſs, departs, indeed, from Mr. Edwards. * There is alſo a *verbal* difference between theſe two gentlemen reſpecting the agency of the Deity in ſin. While Mr. Edwards denies (in words) a poſitive divine influence or efficiency in moral evil, Mr. Weſt expreſsly maintains it, and argues (in his manner) for it, through a number of ſections, in the ſecond part of his eſſay. This, however, is no more than Mr. Edwards's doctrine amounts to, as hath been ſhewn. We purpoſe to reſume this point after taking notice of ſome other things in the eſſay before us, and ſome exceptions to our former publication.

In the ſection on *power*, we conjecture that Mr. Weſt hath applied this word improperly, as a philoſopher and as a moraliſt. The word, as uſed in mechanics, is never applied, by any philoſopher we have had opportunity to read, in the manner Mr. Weſt applies it, to the body *moved*; but uniformly

* Compare part I. ſect. 1, 2. of Mr. Weſt's eſſay (particularly p. 55.) with Edwards p. 43.

uniformly and constantly to the *mover*. * From this arbitrary use of the word power, this philosophy falsely so called, he proceeds to make his deduction, that the word, in its application to human nature, imports only a capacity of being the *subject* of certain *effects* from *divine operation*--- 'tis "a power to be *wrought upon*, not a power to *operate*." (P. 43.)

Admitting his application of the word power to mechanics had been philosophical, what is the inference? that moral agency and mechanism are the same? So it seems. But this, we suppose, Mr. West would not be fond of maintaining; because he appears to disapprove Lord Kaim's opinion recited p. 128.---And because he [Mr. West] hath attempted to shew, that his own scheme does not make mankind machines. Part I. sect. 7. Moreover, in this same section on power, he informs us, that he is "far from apprehending" that his beforementioned use "of the word "power is the *only* sense in which it may be used with pro- "priety, as applied to *moral agents*---to *men*. It may "doubtless be used with propriety to indicate---something "wherein man is a moral agent, and on account of which "he is a fit subject of praise or blame, commendation or "censure." P. 42. The word power, then, as above applied to human nature, "points out no abilities properly in "men---nothing wherein they are moral agents."

P. 44. He "attempts to illustrate that idea of power, "which indicateth and denoteth some ability properly in "men---something wherein man is *a moral agent*, and in "which there is desert of praise or blame,"&c. What is this power or ability, which is essential to moral agency? We are told it is "voluntary exertion." Whatever "*external action*---takes place upon our willing it, is in our power." (P.46.) Whatever "event or action doth not follow the election of the mind, is not in our power."---Yet in the next paragraph, Mr. West saith, Power, in this "construction of it, is not essential to moral agency."

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* Compare p. 37, 38. of Mr. West's essay with Pemberton's view of Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy, p. 31. § 8, 9. p. 82. § 51. Martin on mechanics, passim. Ozanam's cursus mathematicus, vol. 4. part I. passim. Chambers in tit. *Lever*. Were these philosophers "utter "strangers to the laws of nature." (Essay p. 40.)

These things require no very *critical* animadversions. When the word power is applied to human nature in Mr. West's first sense, *it points out nothing wherein men are moral agents.* When it is used in his second sense, *it is not essential to moral agency.* The consequence is plain, that men are not moral agents, having no power or ability that indicateth moral agency. We are clear with Mr. West, that power, in either of the senses he useth it, doth not denote moral agency. "The mind may be free, and exert it-"self with great strength, without any of" the last-mentioned "power." And in the first-mentioned sense, "it in-"dicateth nothing wherein man is a moral agent." A power or liberty with reference to *external actions only* is allowed to human nature by some gentlemen, who yet grant, that virtue and vice lie in the frame of the heart. Liberty, say they, is essential to moral agency. What liberty? *External?* no; for an intelligent creature may be holy or sinful without such liberty. *Internal?* no; for in respect to inward volitions & dispositions, they have "not a power to operate, but "only a power to be wrought upon." (P. 43.) We appeal to common sense whether such a scheme leaves any room to ascribe liberty or agency to mankind? Whether it doth not wholly confound moral agency with mechanism? For who ever attributed liberty or agency to the meer subject and instrument of a foreign operation and action? As well might the saw, ax, or staff in the hands of any man be called agents. Is this the result of a "*careful and strict* "examination and explanation of the powers of human "nature?" Is it a *little* peculiar, that in an essay professedly wrote on "moral agency," the subject *itself* has been kept wholy out of sight?

The two first sections we have now published seem to supersede the occasion for a particular reply to Mr. West's on moral agency and power. We refer him there for further satisfaction. We only remark, that as there appears to us no difference between supposing God to be the cause of sin by his action on the creature *after made*, and supposing an intelligent being to be *made* sinful by him *at first*; so, if we understand Mr. West, he means to make no difference;

ference, but asserts both. Mr. Edwards rather chose to express himself in such manner as leads the reader to conclude his opinion was, that God is the *mediate* cause of sin; Mr. West maintains that he is the *immediate* cause of it. Indeed he observes, "the whole and only difference" between "an immediate and mediate dependance is, that, *in* "*the one case*, the cause---operates through one or a number of *means---in the other*, its tendency and influence are "*immediately* seen, and it doth not operate through any "*medium*. It is quite *unphilosophical* (not to say *atheistical*) "to suffer any number of intervening *media* to obscure the "agency of that divine hand, which God is lifting up, and "making visible in all his works." * We hence conclude, that Mr. West will not except to our reasoning, section second, that it makes no material difference whether the Deity is supposed to be the *mediate* or *immediate* cause of sin and moral turpitude. And when he shall shew, that God is the cause of every act of will in the creatures, should the examiner be instrumental to continue the dispute, he would contradict his own opinion, expressed p. 6. of the examination.

P. 140. Mr. West concedes, "that what Mr. Edwards "hath said on the subject of *motives* is liable to *some* of the "exceptions which the examiner hath taken against it." Yet he is "*humbly* of opinion if" what he hath offered in his own essay "were properly considered, we should not "find the appearance of such inconsistency and absurdity "---as the examiner would persuade the public---may be "fastened upon Mr. Edwards." † The examiner, with many others, would have been glad to have seen this "*ap*-"*pearance* of inconsistency" removed. Notwithstanding the "carefulness" Mr. W. has taken in "examining and explain-"ing the nature and influence of motives," ‡ the subject remains entangled. The word motive "importeth, saith he, no-"thing different from the real choice of the mind---When "motive is considered as *cause* or *antecedent*, its *correlative* "is *outward action*---Motives are *never* to have causal in-"fluence or *efficiency* attributed to them." There is also another sense in which the word motive is used. "Some-"times,

* P. 96. † P. 72. ‡ Part I. sect. 3.

" times, saith he, it is used, neither for volition, nor the " cause of volition; but merely for the external object " which doth, or ought to, engage the affection, and ter- " minate the choice.---Thus, *the motives of the gospel* mean " *the reasons exhibited in the gospel*, why men ought to for- " sake their sins, and turn unto God. Multitudes have " these reasons (motives) full in view; and yet utterly " refuse and neglect to return." As suppose motives of interest, honor, profit, extant in the mind's view at the same time with the motives of the gospel; the former govern to the neglect and refusal of the latter. The *inferior* perceived motive determines the mind's choice to the rejection of the *superior*. For are motives " exhibited and full in view," and yet not *apparent* to or *perceived* by the mind to which they are exhibited, and in whose view they stand? If they *are* perceived, then how can it be that the highest motive always determines volition? Are not those motives, which *ought* to govern, highest, if *full in the view?* Yet "mul- " titudes utterly neglect and refuse them." On the other hand, if they are *not* apparent or perceived, then how are they *exhibited* to, and *full in view* of the mind? how *refused* or *neglected?* Mr. West insists, that motives influence the mind only as the mind is in actual motion in the perception of them. But if perception and choice be the same, how then do motives *influence* volition? how have they a *tendency* to it? Do they influence, have they a tendency, to that which is actually *effected?* After volition has *taken place*, 'tis too late for their influence and tendency. But perhaps what follows may clear up this difficulty: Though " no tendency of motives to volition is perceived " and felt, otherwise than in the *actual taking place and* " *exertion of choice*; yet there is a foundation in the na- " ture of things, arising from some certain quality in ob- " jects, and from the particular state, temper and com- " plexion of the mind, for their being chosen as soon as " they shall come into the view of the mind." (The reader will remember he had just been speaking of motives *full in view, but utterly refused.)* Apply this to the evangelical motives to repentance. With respect to those whose " state, temper and complexion of mind, " antecedently

correspond to these motives, they have a tendency to lead to repentance: But with respect to those in whom there is not this antecedent correspondence of temper, they have not this tendency in the least. There is no foundation for a tendency in gospel motives to engage men's choice, unless the state and temper of their minds correspond to these motives, antecedent to the exhibition of them. Now will Mr. West say, that there is this correspondence of temper in any *unregenerate* person? We trust he will not. The consequence will then be, that *that* change, which the gospel hath a tendency and is designed to produce in men, must be actually effected before it's motives are exhibited---the end must be accomplished before the means are applied---sinners must forsake their sins and turn to God, and then the gospel motives will have a tendency to lead them to repentance; but not before. The gospel then is no tender to the unregenerate. And if not to them, who are those "multitudes" to whom its motives are exhibited, and who "utterly refuse and neglect" them, though "full in their view?"

Such a notion of tendency and influence in motives is very singular: When did any writer before Mr. West ever use the term motives in this sense? that the thing motives are designed to engage to must be effected before the exibition and perception of them? that motives obtain this appellation from the mind's being in actual motion? that motives full in view are utterly neglected and refused? We are quite content the public should judge, whether Mr. West's attempt to reconcile Mr. Edwards with himself has removed the appearance of inconsistency and absurdity, or hath not rather confused and jumbled still more the subject of the determination of the will by motives. In what sense the influence of motives in moral volitions may be admitted, we have endeavoured to shew Part III. sect. 2. of the examination, and section 2d. of the present continuation thereof.

P. 24; 76,---79. Quotations are made in abundance from the examiner to prove him grosly inconsistent with himself, and that he hath given in ample testimony to the truth of the doctrine he oppoſeth. Had Mr. West "pro-

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"perly considered" that at p. 92. he quotes the examiner as admitting, that every moral event must have a cause, and saying, that moral agents are the causes of their own actions, he would not, perhaps, have given himself the trouble to copy so much from the examination. We do maintain that the subjects of moral volitions are also the cause of their own volitions. This is a different thing from saying, that volition is its own cause. The distinction between the terms volition and agent is plain. Agents determine themselves; we say not that the properties or actions of agents are self-determined---that volition, which is already become effect, is the cause of it's own existence. Mr. West had no occasion to represent the examiner's doctrine in this light. And though he supposeth that an enquiry into the cause of volition belongs not to the subject of moral agency, yet we presume enough hath been said, particularly in the 5th section, to shew that it doth. In the same part of Mr. West's essay, the examiner is censured pretty severely for not allowing more weight to a particular distinction of Mr. Edwards's, and treating it with contempt. "Upon a review of the matter," Mr. West "thinks the "examiner himself will be convinced that he hath not "herein done justice to Mr. Edwards."

The examiner hath "reviewed the matter," and is "convinced" of no other "injustice herein done" by him "to Mr. Edwards," than that he did not sufficiently expose the weakness of the distinction refered to. While he asks pardon for this omission, he hopes he has made some atonement for it by taking the trouble to write an whole section professedly on the point. Herein he hath also answered to another exception of Mr. West's a few lines below on the same page; (p. 83.) and in his turn must fault Mr. West for an unfair representation of him. The reader by turning to the page in the examination, which Mr. West refers to, will see the representation is partial.

In what Mr. West hath offered, in divers parts of his essay, in a critical way, on the antecedent state of the mind and volition, he appears slow in understanding the examiner, and doth not represent him to such advantage as might have been done consistently enough with sound criticism.

Part

Part I. sect. 8. Mr. West hath more professedly remarked on the examiner, and accuseth him as having injured both Mr. Edwards and the truth.

The first general accusation (for injury to Mr. Edwards) is divided into seven distinct articles. The 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th, articles are sufficiently answered by the six first sections the examiner hath now published. For answer to the 6th article, the reader is refered to Mr. Edwards's book, *Reform*; and to Mr. West's essay, part I. sect. 2nd. more particularly p. 51, 52.

Art. 1st. and 7th. "The examiner hath condemned "Mr. Edwards as being in alliance with heathen philoso-"phers and Atheists." Some things observed under the former of these articles answered section VII. In this charge reference is had to the examiner's appendix, which, it is alledged, was wrote with a design to "cast an odium on "Mr. Edwards's sentiments and character"---and was "an "invidious employment." The examiner is not conscious of writing from envy, or of any design to cast an odium on the person or character of Mr. Edwards. He aimed to treat this gentleman as a great and good man. After the expressions of esteem for him, interspersed thro' the examination, the author little tho't he should be accused of writing against him from envy, or "with a view "to cast an odium on his character." If a single sentence disrespectful to Mr. Edwards's person or character is contained in the examination, upon it's being pointed out, the examiner will retract it as inadvertently and undesignedly written. Mr. Edwards hath (not without a degree of severity) remarked on Dr. Watts's essay on freedom. Both these gentlemen were "eminent Christian divines," the one in Old, the other in New-England. Mr. Edwards thought Dr. Watts was in an error; and so far was he from thinking he needed an apology for writing against him, because "he was a good divine in *many* re-"spects," that he saith, "there is the more need, on that "account, of opposing his Arminian doctrine on free-"dom; as it will be likely to have the more pernicious "influence, for being taught by a divine of his name "and character." †

† Preface p. 7.

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The appendix was drawn up with a view to render certain *fataliſtical doctrines* odious. We obſerve Mr. Weſt don't deny but the ſpecimen of coincidence we have exhibited in it is juſt. But admitting the agreement, he thinks it of no weight to ſhew that Mr. Edwards's doctrine is wrong; and intimates, that the examiner ſhould have anſwered and confuted the arguments both of Mr. Edwards and thoſe [*fataliſts, epicurians and atheiſts*] with whom he coincided---An encomium is alſo paſs'd on their "learning"---but (prudently enough) not on their *religious* character. 'Tis ſufficient to obſerve, That the doctrine of the writers with whom Mr. Edwards's ſentiments were compared has, by the general conſent of Chriſtians, been ſuppoſed falſe; and moreover, repeatedly confuted by the advocates for revealed and natural religion. We did not think it worth while, in our former publication, to enter on the enquiry, Whether the principles of thoſe fataliſts, epicureans and atheiſts were the truth; but ventured to take the oppoſite "principles *upon truſt*." Mr. Weſt may find by looking into the preface, page 4, and part II. at the beginning, that we propoſed to conſider the ſubject in a *practical*, rather than in a *ſpeculative, metaphyſical* way---that a number of principles were taken for granted. If he really diſputes any of thoſe preliminary principles, or ſhould directly appear as an advocate for fatality and atheiſm, and there ſhould be danger of atheiſm's gaining ground *in conſequence of what he may publiſh*; no doubt there are thoſe who will debate the ſubject of neceſſity with him, as it ſtands on the footing of fatality or atheiſm---or at leaſt encourage a re-publication of ſome of the irrefragable anſwers of thoſe authors who have appeared in this controverſy with avowed fataliſts and atheiſts. At preſent we are not willing to think there is occaſion to enter on a confutation of atheiſtical principles. We ſhould be ſorry, if, in a *Chriſtian* land, *natural religion* at leaſt may not be preſuppoſed. We ſuppoſed we had "to do with thoſe who "believe the bible," as Mr. Edwards ſaid he had. (P. 138.) If Mr. Weſt ſhould write another eſſay on moral agency, we hope we ſhould have no occaſion to alter our opinion.

Mr. Weſt, it ſeems, was ſenſible, that the principles extracted

tracted from those writers, with whom we have compared Mr. Edwards, were indeed "obnoxious and unpopular," no less than the doctrine he himself hath advanced, or he would not have intimated his concern, that the specimen of coincidence exhibited in our appendix might prejudice the reader against Mr. Edwards, "raise a popular cry a-"gainst him, and cast an odium on his sentiments." Mr. West remarks, what the examiner himself had said, that he did not suppose the agreement of Mr. Edwards's scheme with their opinion who dissented from the common belief, even in the heathen world, proves it to be false. We were, indeed, far from supposing that this *alone* proved it false. At the same time we knew, that the doctrine of the old fatalists was as generally rejected among Christians, as the principles of *Bellarmine* among protestants---and supposed on as good reasons. It was, therefore, thought it might be taken for granted, that Mr. Edwards's foundation principle being shewn to coincide with the fatality of the heathen, would be sufficient with all Christians for it's being rejected: Nor have we any scruple, but Mr. West's attempt to vindicate it will serve the good purpose of bringing it into just abhorrence.

We are, upon the whole, by no means compelled to grant, that we have misrepresented Mr. Edwards in any of the things laid to our charge. If we had indeed mistook his meaning, the difficulty of apprehending him; his using words (as he declares) out of their common acceptation; bewildering himself and his readers with a multiplicity of refinements and subtile distinctions, and the probability that in many places he had no determinate ideas, would be some apology. It hath not, however, been in any measure shewn, that we have been guilty of misrepresentation.

N. B. On Mr. West's admonition, (p. 152.) we have reviewed part IV. sect. 6. of Mr. Edwards's enquiry, and find it no answer to the objection; but are rather confirmed in the opinion, that he chose to "evade a direct answer."

The other part of the accusation against the examiner is, that he hath injured the *truth*.

Mr. West justly remarks, that "Mr. Edwards's cha-"racter is but of small importance compared to that of

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" the cause of truth." * As the examiner hopes it doth not appear that he hath done any injustice to the former, so he presumes he is clear in regard to the latter---Though he pretends not that he is wholly free from error, yet Mr. West has not convinced him of publishing any thing injurious to truth. The main thing in which it is alledged that he hath injured the truth is, his asserting a power of self-determination in moral agents. In what sense the examiner asserts such a power, with the evidence in support of it, the reader may see, if he will take the trouble to look over Part III. sect. 1. of the examination, and sect. I. and II. of the present continuation of it.

Mr. West represents it as the examiner's " real senti-
" ment,---that *unregenerate* sinners have as full power, to
" all intents and purposes, to do every thing that is re-
" ally required of them---as the regenerate have; or even
" the angels of God in heaven." † In proof of this, he hath made two quotations from p. 116, of the examination, leaving out some intermediate words, which, had he quoted, the reader would have seen, that the above-mentioned is as far from being the author's *real sentiment* as the most obnoxious in Mr. West's essay. The first quotation is in the following words: " We deny that any are
" commanded, invited, exhorted, &c. to exert powers and
" faculties they are not possessed of; to act from princi-
" ples they are not endowed with." Here the quotation stops. Justice to himself obligeth the examiner to *re-publish* what intervenes this and the other quotation---" to use
" means out of their power. Such faculties, principles,
" powers and affections as they are possessed of, such means
" as are within their power, are the only ones they can be
" required to act from and improve: Arguments laid be-
" fore wicked men are adapted to operate on their rea-
" son and moral discernment; on the principle of inge-
" nuity and gratitude; on their hope, fear, joy, sorrow,
" and the various movements of the mind." Had Mr. West produced these intermediate words, his readers would have seen, that the terms " powers and faculties " in his quotation mean " reason and moral discernment"---that by

* Preface, p. 8. † P. 162.

by the word "principles" the examiner meant such principles as these "ingenuity, gratitude, hope, fear, joy, sor-"row," &c. Now are not the unregenerate "possessed" of the powers and faculties spoken of? Are not "reason and moral discernment" essential to moral agency? Are those who are not possessed of such powers and faculties "commanded, "invited, exhorted to exert" them? And are not the unregenerate "endowed with" the natural principles or affections "of ingenuity, gratitude, hope, fear," &c? Or are those who are not endowed with such principles and affectinos "commanded, invited, exhorted, &c. to act from" them? Is the *moral faculty* necessary to moral agency? Doth God "command, invite or exhort" to *natural* impossibilities?---that men use means they have not? The answer to these questions will shew whether the examiner hath injured the truth, or been injured by his *remarker*. Nothing could be farther from the examiner's *real sentiment* or intention than to assert, that man's *moral* power in unregeneracy is equal to all his necessities, or to his whole duty. Nothing would be more contrary to, than what Mr. West represents to be *in fact and reality*, his opinion, viz. that the unregenerate are not commanded, invited, exhorted to exert or act from any other *moral* principles, affections and dispositions than they are endowed with. He would further fasten this sentiment on the examiner by his other quotation refered to above, and which immediately follows the intervening sentences already quoted. This other quotation is a dismember'd part of a sentence in the words following. "Nor can it be proposed "that the unregenerate should act from the highest spiri-"tual principles"----here Mr. West's quotation stops, which should have been continued, (instead of a period, with a comma only, after the word *principles)* thus: "but "from such as they are capable of being influenced by "as reasonable beings, possessed of a moral faculty, and "subjects of moral government," &c. In some preceeding pages, the examiner had been speaking of the means of grace used with unregenerate men *in order to* their conversion. Now to "propose" any thing as a *medium* of conversion, which would imply that the thing itself hath

taken place, the examiner supposed, and still believes, to be absurd. But to "propose to the unregenerate to act from "the highest spiritual principles," *as a medium of regeneracy*, would be to suppose regeneracy had already taken place. Therefore, *in this view*, "it cannot be proposed "that the unregenerate should act from the highest spiri-"tual principles." For by the very supposition, the intervention of the proposed medium is superseded. The examiner cannot see wherein the argument fails, or is injurious to truth. The whole paragraph, together with the connection it stands in, clearly shews the examiner's design and meaning to have been as now explained. That it is the duty of the unregenerate to forsake their sins---that they have no excuse for making any delay in turning to God---that they are obliged to love him with all their heart---and consequently to act from *moral* and *spiritual* principles they are not possessed of, or endowed with, the examiner fully believes, nor hath he ever denied. If it "was not with design, but wholly for want of under-"standing what the opinion and real sentiment" of the examiner is, that Mr. West hath so grosly "misrepre-sented" him, he can easily forgive this wrong: But it is not so easy to see how Mr. West can forgive himself, if he hath thus "perverted" the examiner's "meaning, and "wrested his words from their plain and obvious im-"port, designedly, by forced and unnatural construction---"having no other end in view than to raise the popular "cry against him, and cast an odium upon his sentiments "and character.*"---The examiner doth not charge Mr. West with the last mentioned view and design. He hopes better things. But as Mr. West himself is the best judge of his own views and designs; so he cannot think it amiss that the examiner hath taken occasion to mention this thing, refering the decision of it to his own mind---For the examiner claims no warrant to judge another man's servant. He thinks much injustice is done to his sentiments by Mr. West's representation of them in various parts of his essay; but more especially P. 76,--79; 104; 160,---167. He is willing to hope that this misrepresen-tation

* Preface p. 9. Essay p. 106; 150.

tation was not invidious. Possibly the examiner did not express his sentiments clearly. He hath now in his first section touched the subject of means again, and, it may be, said some things that may serve to elucidate his sentiments. Though as this point doth not directly fall within his design, he hath not enlarged upon it. Perhaps Mr. West's *real sentiment* is, that there is *no medium* of regeneration---that the gospel is not a means of illumination and conversion. For he has intimated that gospel motives are no motives except to those whose temper and state of mind correspond to them antecedent to the exhibition or perception of them: Which sentiment, however, remains to be reconciled with his other assertion, that "gospel motives "*full in view* are utterly neglected and refused by multi-"tudes." The examiner is willing, upon the whole, that what is offered on the subject of means, p. 111,---116. of the examination should stand as it doth.---And the rather as he hath Mr. Edwards's concurrence with him in the principal things meant to be there asserted. *

P. 140;

* We shall insert in this place some pertinent passages from Mr. Edwards's sermon on pressing into the kingdom of God. What he offers, in the following quotations, it will be observed, respects those who at present are in a "*natural condition*; who, he saith, may have "*strong desires* to get out of it, and to get an interest in Christ—To "obtain salvation is desired by them above all things in the world—"when they come to answer the expression of *pressing into the kingdom* "*of God*, this concern—in a manner engrosseth the care of the mind" —It further "denotes *earnestness and firmness of resolution*—as it was in the psalmist, *One thing have I desired, and that will I seek after.* There must be a sense of the great importance and *necessity* of the mercy to be sought, and there must also be a sense of *opportunity* to obtain it, or the encouragement there is to seek it—The firmness of resolution lies in the fulness of the disposition of the heart to do what is resolved to be done. Those that are *pressing into the kingdom of God* have a disposition of heart to do every thing that is required, and that lies in their power to do, and to continue in it—'tis the constant bent of the soul, if possible, to obtain the kingdom of God. It signifies," moreover, "*greatness of endeavor.* 'Tis expressed Eccl. 9. 10. by *doing with our might what our hand finds to do*—Where there is *strength of desire*, and *firmness of resolution*, there will be answerable *endeavors*: Persons thus engaged in their hearts will *strive to enter in at the strait gate*, and will be *violent for heaven*; their practice will be agreable to the counsel of the wise man, in Prov. ii. at the beginning. See P. 135, 136.

P. 137. Pressing, &c. denotes *an engagedness* and *earnestness that is* DIRECTLY *about that business of getting into the kingdom of God*—P. 138.

Then

P. 140 ; 167. of the eſſay, and p. 8. of the preface, the reader will find that Mr. Weſt hath allowed a ſmall ſhare of merit to the examiner's performance. This would have been accepted with much thankfulneſs ; but the examiner is denied the ſatisfaction of receiving or acknowledging the favor, by what is immediately added in thoſe places--- and by his being charged elſewhere with " palpably miſ- " taking" Mr. Edwards---(p. 146.) with " diſingenuity " and unfairneſs, injuſtice, want of candor"--- no " lover " of truth," nor an " honeſt enquirer after it"---writing from " envy, to caſt an odium, and raiſe a popular cry"---

condemned

Then are perſons in the moſt likely way to obtain the kingdom of heaven, when the intent of their minds, and the engagedneſs of their ſpirits, is about their proper work and buſineſs, and all the bent of their ſouls is to attend on God's means, and to do what he commands and directs them to."

Further : " By preſſing, &c. is denoted a *breaking through oppoſition and difficulties*—They that are preſſing—are ſo ſet for ſalvation that thoſe things by which others are diſcouraged, and ſtop'd, and turn'd back, don't ſtop *them*, but they preſs through them—P. 139. Thoſe things that, before he was thoroughly rouſed from his ſecurity, he uſed to ſtick at, and was wont to have long parlyings and diſputings with his own conſcience about, and ſet carnal reaſon to work to invent arguments and pleas to excuſe himſelf from, he now ſticks at no longer ; he has done with this endleſs diſputing and reaſoning, and preſſes violently through all difficulties ; let what will be in the way, heaven is what he muſt, and will obtain, not *if he can without difficulty*, but *if it be poſſible*.

P. 142. Such a manner of ſpeaking is needful to *prepare* perſons for the kingdom of God—the ordinary means God makes uſe of, to bring perſons to an acquaintance with themſelves, to a ſight of their own hearts, to a ſenſe of their own helpleſſneſs, and to a deſpair in their own ſtrength and righteouſneſs."

P. 143. " Objection 1. Some may be ready to ſay, We cannot do this of ourſelves, &c.

Anſ. 1. Though earneſtneſs of mind be not *immediately* in your power ; yet the conſideration of what has been ſaid of the need of it, may be a *means* of ſtiring you up to it. 'Tis true, perſons never will be thoroughly engaged in this buſineſs, unleſs it be by God's influence : but God influences perſons by means—P. 144. If perſons can but be made ſenſible of the neceſſity of ſalvation, and alſo do fully conſider the exceeding difficulty of it, and the greatneſs of the oppoſition, and how ſhort and uncertain the time is ; but yet are ſenſible that they have an opportunity, and that there is a poſſibility of their obtaining, they will need no more in order to their being thoroughly engaged and reſolved in this matter.

P. 144.

condemned as a *libertine*, *heretic*, &c. * Theſe are heavy charges; ſuch as the examiner would be ſorry to deſerve ---ſuch as no man ſhould allow himſelf to bring againſt another but on the cleareſt evidence. The goſpel of Chriſt inſtructs its profeſſors, and eſpecially its miniſters, in a *more excellent way*.

"To re-criminate is juſt." Mr. Weſt has furniſhed abundant occaſion. But the examiner had rather the public would take this buſineſs on them, than perform it himſelf.

Mr. Weſt frequently faults the examiner for not particularly replying to ſome peculiar arguments of Mr. Edwards's. The anſwer is, We do not think ourſelves obliged to follow a metaphyſician cloſe through all the mazes of error. We fear the public will think that more than attention enough hath been already given to metaphyſical ſubtilties. If the reader's patience hath held out thus far, we are very thankful, and are loth to treſpaſs on it any further.

Mr. Weſt hath pretermitted many material difficulties the examiner had noticed in Mr. Edwards's ſcheme. *The whole firſt part* of the examination is unnoticed, and implicitly confirmed, by him. Nor is the leaſt notice taken of ſection 3d. part III. where the examiner attempts to ſhew,

P. 144. 2ly. Though ſtrong deſires and reſolutions of mind be not in your power, yet painfulneſs of endeavors is in your power. 'Tis in your power to take pains in the uſe of means; yea, very great pains. You can be very painful and diligent in watching your own heart, and ſtriving againſt ſin; though there is all manner of corruption in the heart, that is continually ready to work, yet you can very laboriouſly watch and ſtrive againſt theſe corruptions; and 'tis in your power, with great diligence to attend the matter of your duty towards God, and towards your neighbour. 'Tis in your power to attend all ordinances, and all public and private duties of religion, and to do it with your might.

P. 145. Earneſtneſs of mind, and diligence of endeavor, tend to promote each other: He that has an heart earneſtly engaged, will *take pains*; and he that is diligent and *painful* in all duty, probably will not be *ſo* long, before he finds the *ſenſibleneſs* of his heart, and *earneſtneſs* of his ſpirit greatly increaſed."

How far theſe things comport with what Mr. Edwards hath offered in his book on the will, thoſe may judge who will be at the trouble to make the compariſon. See particularly part III. ſect. 5.

* P. 31; 88; 138, and ſection 8. part I.

ſhew, that if Mr. Edwards's ſcheme be true in ſpeculation, it is not applicable to *practice*. But very few things in the other parts of the examination are remarked upon, and moſt of thoſe that are, much miſrepreſented. If it would not be too much *vanity*, the examiner would conſtrue Mr. Weſt's pretermiſſion of ſome things as a tacit approbation of them. But he calls to mind, that " a vindication of " Mr. Edwards was not ſo particularly in" Mr. Weſt's " view." And wherein he has miſunderſtood or miſrepreſented the examiner, the latter might be ſo unhappy as not to expreſs his ſentiments with preciſion and perſpicuity. It was far from any ſlight of the examiner's performance, that Mr. Weſt omitted to remark on the greater and *principal* part of it. He hath admitted the examiner's chief objection to Mr. Edwards's book, which is more generous than was even expected.

The objection refered to is, that Mr. Edwards's doctrine makes God the cauſe of ſin. This Mr. Weſt admits, and ſets himſelf to prove that there is no weight in it. The examiner was fully perſuaded that this was the clear conſequence of Mr. Edwards's doctrine, and imagined that whenever it was made to appear, the advocates for the doctrine among *Chriſtians* would immediately renounce it. He little expected that the conſequence would be adopted as a principle, and an attempt made to defend it, by any one of Mr. Edwards's friends. He hath the ſatisfaction to find, that many worthy gentlemen, who have thought favourably of Mr. Edwards's book, expreſs much diſapprobation of Mr. Weſt's performance. Nor is the examiner without hopes, that what Mr. Weſt hath wrote may anſwer the good end of bringing into juſt diſcredit the doctrine for which he hath appeared as an advocate.

Moral and Chriſtian writers hitherto have choſen to ſay, that God *permits* or *ſuffers* moral evil. But, ſays Mr. Weſt, " in my humble opinion, theſe terms have been " improperly uſed. We have no occaſion for theſe ſoften- " ing, lenient, gentle, timid, inſignificant terms, in order " to relieve our imaginations---it implying no inconſiſten- " cy to ſuppoſe, that God, either mediately or immediate- " ly, by his CREATIVE will and *agency cauſeth* the exiſt-

" ence

"ence of sin." Hence he supposeth that the scripture expressions, *I will harden Pharaoh's heart*, *The Lord hardned the heart of Pharaoh*, "represent God's ACTUALLY EFFECTING THIS HARDNESS, BY HIS OWN POSITIVE AGENCY." So exceeding peremptory is he in this opinion, that to put any other construction on these expressions, is to "subtilize and perfectly interpret them away"---"God hath "the same right to MAKE some of mankind holy, and others *sinful*, as the potter hath power over the clay to "form one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonor." In any other way of "analysing the word of God," he thinks, "we must forever despair of determining "any doctrine by it"---and tells us, that "the apostle Paul "is full in this doctrine of DIVINE EFFICIENCY in moral "evil"---which, "however disgustful and unpopular in "our day, we hope," says he, "the time will come when "the scriptures shall be understood in their true simplicity, beauty and perspicuity; and the spirit of God be "so plentifully poured out, that the passions and corruptions of men shall not be irritated by *plain evangelical truth*." * In his "humble opinion," tis a matter clear and important, that "we are compelled to resolve all" the moral evil that takes place in the world "into the constant divine agency and operation as CAUSE of the existence of moral evil as its EFFECT---the *only* thing that "hath PRODUCTIVE INFLUENCE and EFFICIENCY" therein. ‖

Here the reader hath a general view of Mr. West's scheme, and some specimen of the spirit with which he wrote. Similar instances of positiveness, assurance and uncharitableness are interspersed through the whole of his essay, and may be seen, by those who desire it, in the three first pages of his preface---also p. 31; 75; 88; 128; 140: 172; 217, 218; 253, and sundry other places. Here those who cannot believe with him, that God is the efficient cause of all the wickedness of men and devils, are represented as men of corrupt minds---destitute of the spirit of God---irritated with plain evangelical truth---of a proud and haughty spirit, spurning at the thought of a dependance on

* P. 241,—247. ‖ P. 66; 131; 241.

on the ſovereign of the univerſe---oppoſers of the free, ſovereign and glorious grace of God---objecting to the moſt important doctrines of revelation---deviſing ſubtil methods to ſtifle the upbraidings of conſcience---having a deſign to eradicate from their own minds, and thoſe of others, all principles of religion. This is to be "challenged in a "high tone;" (p. 127.) and ill comports with ſome profeſſions of modeſty and diffidence in the preface to his performance---with his frequently beſpeaking the public candor to a "new and obnoxious doctrine advanced" by him---with the aſſurances (as an encouragement to follow him in "an unbeaten path") that he would not be "poſitive"---that his "fears and apprehenſions had been great leaſt he ſhould reproach" his maker---with his further requeſting the public to be even laviſh of their candor, and not conſtrue "any air of "peremptorineſs as intended to expreſs the confidence he "had in his own ſentiments, but as meant to give the argu-"ment its greateſt advantage."

They who deſire candor muſt be candid. "Peremptorineſs" rather manifeſts a writer's "confidence" than helps his "argument." It ſeldom fails to excite diſguſt. It is eſpecially offenſive in "a young writer"---Moſt of all when writing againſt "the reigning ſentiments"---writing on a ſubject too, which "hath engaged the attention, and employed the pens, of the greateſt geniuſes, in all ages," while yet none of them (among the friends of religion) ever had the aſſurance to advance and defend this principle, that all the wickedneſs in the world proceeds from *the creating will and efficiency of God.* Well might Mr. Weſt call his doctrine "new, diſguſtful and unpopular." And was no more reſpect due to the public, whoſe candor was aſked! No more to the republic of letters in particular! No more to wiſe and good men of all denominations! Could he expect, that his ſpeaking of himſelf as "an inexperienced writer" would atone for the aſperſion caſt on all who do not embrace this new and ſtrange doctrine, as enemies to the ſovereignty and grace of God?--deſtitute of religion and conſcience? If there be a God and moral governor, may we not take this one "principle upon truſt," that he is not the cauſe of ſin?

The

The point in which all Mr. West's arguments meet---which he takes for granted through the first part of his essay, and sets himself to defend in the second, is, the divine agency and efficiency in sin. Mr. Edwards would not admit this was a consequence from his doctrine. And many may be ready to think, that, in representing Mr. Edwards in this light, Mr. West hath done greater injustice to that eminent divine, than any he chargeth the examiner with. In truth, when Mr. West saw that Mr. Edwards's scheme concluded in this, he ought at once to have renounced a doctrine so reproachful to his maker. LET GOD BE TRUE, AND EVERY MAN A LYAR. A direct denial of the God that is above would not be a greater grief and offence to most intelligent and serious Christians, than this doctrine of his *causality* in moral evil. They esteem the assertion blasphemous. Mr. West, doubtless, views the matter in a very different light. But is it not astonishing that any discerning, serious person should assert peremptorily, and with great uncharitableness too towards those who differ from him, what is asserted, and often repeated, in his essay! Had he been humble and modest, would he not have been more fearful least he should publish things inconsistent with divine moral rectitude? In the leading sentiment of his essay, we have no other controversy with him than all the Christians in the world have---no other than all sober, consistent theists have.

The Christian's bible instructs him, that the *new man* is God's creation: But he never learnt from it, that the *old man*, with his deeds, is so. It instructs him, that the son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the *devil*; not that he came to destroy the works of GOD---or that the works of the devil are the product of divine agency. It instructs him, that Jesus the son of God came to save his people from their *sins*; not that his design was to save them from the effects of the *divine influence* and *operation* upon them. His bible instructs the Christian, that it is God who worketh in us to will and to do that which is *good*; not that he worketh in us to will and to do that which is *sinful* and contrary to his holy nature and law. The latter is expressly ascribed to the spirit which is in the world, in contradis-

tinction from the ſpirit which is in good men. (The ſpirit that worketh in the children of diſobedience is not, however, the proper *efficient* of their wickedneſs, he only ſolliciteth them to it. For every man is then tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed.) The Chriſtian learns from his bible, that God *cannot be tempted with evil*, and that *he tempteth no man*; not that every act of ſin is to be reſolved into his *productive influence.*

☞WE may ſuppoſe a reader of Mr. Weſt's eſſay, to addreſs him thus: I admit, ſir, your poſition of the divine agency or efficiency in ſin. You have clearly eſtabliſhed it. But I deny that *that* being, whom you make the only cauſe of moral evil, is holy, juſt and good. I demand a proof of his moral perfections, on your principles. My bible, indeed, tells me, that God is holy, and commands me to be holy for this reaſon. But I deny the principle laid down. It ſhould have been, I the Lord your God am unholy; and then the injunction would have ſtood thus, Be ye alſo unholy. If I reaſon wrong, pray ſet me right---and, as you have made me a proſelyte to your hypotheſis, ſhew me, if poſſible, that God is holy, notwithſtanding his ſuppoſed efficiency in ſin.

The fatality of the heathen is really leſs abhorrent than Mr. Weſt's opinion of the divine efficiency in moral evil. They "fancied that *Jupiter*, and all the gods, were obliged to ſubmit to fate, which was to be controuled by no power whatever. The *Stoics* ſuppoſed that the untractableneſs of matter was the cauſe of evil; that God would have made all things perfect, but an evil bias in matter, repugnant to his benevolence," prevented, "whence aroſe all manner of evil." This has ſome appearance of reſpect to the divine moral character: But Mr. Weſt's opinion robs the deity of this character, even in appearance, as well as in reality. When ſuch things are publiſhed as "plain, important, evangelical truths," what ſhall we ſay? Doth the publiſher really deſire to have the foundations, even of natural religion, laid again? Were an avowed ATHEIST to aſſert

aſſert them, we ſhould tell him he belied the perceptions and operations of his own mind, as well as thoſe of all mankind.

There appears the ſame "air of peremptorineſs" in what Mr. Weſt hath wrote on divine foreknowledge. The two firſt pages of his preface manifeſt this. We only obſerve, that he repreſents thoſe who profeſs to believe divine preſcience and human liberty, and ſtill ſuppoſe that an *human* intellect cannot reconcile them together, as maintaining that they are *irreconcileable* and *inconſiſtent* with each other. Let an inſtance be produced in ſupport of this. We know not a ſingle writer who maintains that preſcience and liberty are inconſiſtent, profeſſing at the ſame time a full belief of both. There is a plain difference between a perſon's ſaying that *he* cannot reconcile them, yea, that no *human* underſtanding can; and ſaying, they are *abſolutely* irreconcileable and inconſiſtent. If Mr. Weſt doth not diſcern a difference, he may poſſibly find that wiſer men do, if he will be at the trouble to turn to the ſection on foreknowledge---to which we alſo refer him, together with the 4th. 5th. 8th. and 9th. ſections, for the neceſſary obſervations on the merits of his opinion concerning the divine agency in moral evil.

P. 103, 104. he ſaith, that the examiner's ſcheme "*confeſſedly*" involved this difficulty, that preſcience cannot be reconciled with liberty---(diſtinguiſhing this word by a different type, as we have done.) If the examiner hath *confeſſed* this---or if it can, by plain implication, be ſhewn to be contained in any thing he hath publiſhed, he will immediately retract it, as contrary to his own principles and common ſenſe. Mr. Weſt beſt knows whether he "de-"ſignedly miſunderſtood or perverted" the examiner's "meaning." But after having repreſented him to the public as *confeſſing* what cannot be fixed upon him by *implication*, Mr. Weſt ſhould not have taken occaſion to triumph over him as chargeable with the moſt palpable "impropriety," and incapable of being impreſſed with a ſenſe of it. This is ſomewhat extraordinary. Mr. Weſt will deſerve pity, if this intimation doth not make "a deeper impreſſion on his mind," than what he hath wrote in the

pages

pages laſt refered to hath made on the examiner---and an impreſſion of a quite different kind. By turning to the place, the reader may at once judge, whether the examiner's words contain the *confeſſion* aſcribed to him.

In reply to Mr. Weſt's hypotheſis, part II. ſect. 1, 2 ; 4. reſpecting the deſirableneſs of moral evil, and its being a neceſſary means of effecting the greateſt good, we refer him to the ſixth ſection we have now publiſhed. He will, perhaps, find it a difficult taſk to prove, that an holy God creates vicious diſpoſitions in multitudes, that they may be fit objects of eternal puniſhment, as a means of manifeſting his glorious name, in their perdition, to a few veſſels of mercy : In other words, that the wickedneſs and puniſhment of infernals is what ſecures the holineſs and happineſs of ſaints and angels ; and that with this view God effects their wickedneſs, that he may inflict their puniſhment. What warrant hath Mr. Weſt, or any man, to ſay, that, had not moral evil exiſted, the governor of the world could not have exhibited his hatred of ſin, his love of holineſs, his goodneſs and authority illuſtriouſly in *other* ways ? Has the authority and dominion of Jehovah its foundation or ſecurity in ſin ?

Mr. Weſt hath undertaken to make a compariſon between a ſyſtem *without* ſin, and one *with* it. Can he then clearly diſcern what would have been, had ſin never entred the world ? in a ſyſtem in which univerſal holineſs ſhould prevail ? If he doth not ſuppoſe he can, why doth he make his compariſon, when he had juſt before " acknowledged, " that where the objects between which a compariſon is to " be made are not *both in view*, we cannot judge of them " by way of compariſon ?" (P. 173.) Are the things he hath ſaid on the *preferableneſs* and *deſireableneſs* of moral evil, " certainly manifeſt and ſelf-evident truths ?" * And muſt it argue " prejudice, ſourneſs and bitterneſs" to reject them ? How came Mr. Weſt by his deciſive knowledge in theſe high matters ! WHO is *prejudiced*, *ſour*, and *bitter* !†

" The grand pillars of Mr. Edwards's doctrine ſtand " firm and unſhaken," in Mr. Weſt's opinion, ‡ notwithſtanding what the examiner before publiſhed. If the doctrine

* P. 195. † Preface p. 6, 7. ‡ Pref. p. 8, 9.

trine really terminates in the leading sentiment of Mr. West's essay, let the intelligent judge whether its grand pillars *stand strong*. In truth, the examiner thinks, that what Mr. West hath wrote hath shaken them more than his own examination of the doctrine. It seems to be now conceded, that Mr. Edwards's scheme makes God the efficient cause of sin. If this be his doctrine, few sensible, serious persons will think there is occasion to proceed any further. It was the *foundation* which was proposed to be examined. Let reason and religion say, whether this be not subverted, if it hath no other bottom than a supposed divine causality in moral evil. If we may not be confident in the contrary sentiment, we may not be of any thing. We cannot determine any doctrine by the bible, on this hypothesis. For if God may be the cause of wickedness, he may deceive us. How then can we have any dependance on his word?

Though Mr. West could not "*justly* expect" a *particular* "answer to" his own "reasonings," * considering the nature and spirit of his performance; yet he may possibly find, either in the preceeding *strictures*, or in the *continuation* of the examination, that most of the things he hath offered in a way of *argument* have had some attention paid them---at least the most *material*. *Personal* things have had very little notice: They ought not to have been introduced into the debate. The examiner trusts the public will think he has sufficiently vindicated himself from some exceptions and misrepresentations of Mr. West's; and, if he hath "in any thing corrected him," ‡ that it hath been done without reviling: For he would not be found *beating his fellow-servant*. "Many things, which appeared to be "exceptionable, have been passed unnoticed;" since they all meet in one capital error.

But after boldly advancing this doctrine, that all manner of sin and blasphemy is the effect of God's action on the creature, may we not well marvel to find him (in testimony of his zeal and valor for the truth) bringing an accusation against those who disbelieve it, as seting themselves against the doctrines of Calvinism and of grace---pluming himself on the supposition of his being an advocate for these

* P. 254. ‡ Pref. to essay, p. 9.

theſe doctrines ! Do Calviniſts deny original righteouſneſs ? Do they ſay, that the preſent impotency of mankind is not the penal conſequence of the fall as its ſource, and is only *moral*, not *natural ?* Do Calviniſts aſſert the divine efficiency in ſin ? Let the intelligent judge whether Mr. Weſt is a Calviniſt. The queſtion, however, is not, what is Calviniſm ? but, what is truth ? What ſaith the ſcripture ? As to the doctrines of grace, *proteſtant* divines have generally accounted them ſuch as theſe---The atonement of the mediator ; juſtification by faith in it ; the efficacy of repentance to procure pardon through the redemption in Chriſt Jeſus ; the promiſe of divine aids, of peace with God, and of eternal life, through the ſame mediator. If by the doctrines of grace Mr. Weſt means any thing contrary to theſe, let him explain himſelf.

We cannot conclude without renewed expreſſions of our aſtoniſhment, that a gentleman who is *ſet for the defence of the goſpel*, (and we preſume really believes it) ſhould publiſh ſo glaring a perverſion of it, (as many things contain'd in the eſſay evidently are) inſtead of manifeſting the truth as it is in Jeſus. It reminds us of St. Paul's addreſs to the Galatians, *Who hath bewitched you !* If this be not to *preach another goſpel*, 'tis difficult to ſay what is. *We can do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth :* Which words, while expreſſive of the duty of a goſpel miniſter, are a caution to him to *take heed to his doctrine*, that he be not inſtrumental in *corrupting* mens *minds from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt*---To take heed, *leſt haply he be found* TO FIGHT AGAINST GOD. 'Tis a cheap ſacrifice to give up any hypotheſis to the honor of THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS ; But a dreadful thing to CORRUPT THE WORD OF GOD.

Thoſe who are employed to *ſpread the ſavor of the* REDEEMER's name, and to addreſs mankind *in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt* ; whoſe incumbent Duty it is to *uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech* ; ſhould account a reputation for ſkill in *metaphyſical* diſquiſitions unworthy their emulation.

Mr. Weſt's ſcheme, on bare propoſal, ſtrikes an intelligent and devout mind with horror. It carries its own refutation. It is a palpable reproach to God, and repug-

nant

nant to every juſt idea of religion. No ſuppoſeable conſequences can be more ſhocking than the naked doctrine itſelf; on the footing of which there is no moral agency and accountableneſs, no moral governor, no righteous judgment. He ought to be withſtood to the face, as one who hath ſpoken wickedly for God---(though we truſt from prejudice and miſapprehenſion, not from wilful enmity to the truth.) We mean not to accuſe him of any *deſigned* perverſion of the doctrines of revelation. We wiſh he may ſee his error, as we are perſuaded it is very great. Should he be convinced of it, we doubt not but he will be ingenuous enough to acknowledge it, in honor both to himſelf and the truth.

When impious tenets are publickly advanced, a vindication of the divine character forbids us to be unconcern'd. If any things we have ſaid towards the cloſe of theſe ſtrictures ſhould have the appearance of *ſeverity*, *that* ſeverity hath not the *perſon*, but the *opinions* of our author for its object---opinions to which too ſtrong a diſlike cannot be expreſſed---We have, at the ſame time, aimed to keep in mind the apoſtolic advice, *In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves.*

We can heartily join in "committing the cauſe to him "who judgeth righteous judgment."

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CORRECTIONS.

Page		line	from	read
7		1	top	replete
---		3	top	reduce
12		12	top	them
34		15	bottom	; [after things]
39	Margin	14	bottom	object
43	Margin, laſt line,			. [after them]
51		8	bottom	proceed
54		8	top	conſequence
57		5	top	ever
66		24	top	the creature
69		5	bottom	portion
75		7	top	lies
77		7	bottom	on this ſuppoſition
81	Margin	4	top	, [after providence]
83		15	bottom	peremptory
---		14	-----	his controverſy
97		12	top	could
101		7	bottom	thoſe
103	Margin	2	bottom	--- [after cauſe]
109		3	bottom	[*dele* Origen, after Clemens]
125		12	top	effected
128		11	bottom	--- [after with]
----		8	-----	points
136		13	bottom	poſſeſſeth
----		10	-----	[*dele* the before human]
153		11	top	affections
156	Margin	18	bottom	ſeeking

Beſides ſome leſſer ſlips, eſpecially in the pointing.

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